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THE

CHURCH AND HER DOCTRINE.

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BY

THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF SYDNEY.

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PREBENDARY OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.

"The Church of England as it stands distinguished from all Papal and Puritan innovations, and as it adheres to the doctrine of the Cross."
—*From the Will of* BISHOP KEN.

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CHURCH DOCTRINE.

THE HOLY TRINITY.

By the Right Rev. W. SAUMAREZ SMITH, D.D.,
Bishop of Sydney.

A Jewish prophet of old closed a wondrous prediction of a future time of enlightenment and peace with the saying, "All the peoples will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." This saying illustrates two facts: one, the universal prevalence of religion; the other, the felt contrast between the pure monotheism of Israel and the diverse idolatrous systems of the nations by which Israel was surrounded. But from no religion is absent the idea of God. A religion cannot, indeed, exist unless there be some dogmatic material out of which a "theology" of some kind may be formed.

That material may be found partly in the work-

ings of an internal consciousness, partly in external history; and on the combination of what may be termed spiritual intuition (or sentiment) with historical revelation depends the development of the knowledge of God among men. In all religions the primal postulate is theistic; and the course of religious development in any people varies with their knowledge of Deity. If, then, there be a nation in which more than in other nations this knowledge has assumed historical definiteness, it will be there that we may look for the highest religious development.

"I believe in God," is, whether more or less distinctly expressed, the germ of every religious creed; and the questions, What is God? What are the Divine attributes? By what name or names may Deity be invoked? How has God revealed Himself? What is His relation to mankind? are questions which, more or less clearly, are virtually put by every religious thinker.

Regarding the religion of Israel as without doubt the most definite and loftiest system of monotheism in the ancient world, we may also perceive how, in the heathen religions, what has been called "henotheism" pointed towards either a traditional, or an instinctive, monotheistic belief; whilst the polytheism, everywhere pre-

valent, reflected the plurality of aspects and relations in which the conception of Deity was present to men's minds. Unity and plurality are ever connected with all human endeavours to investigate or speculate upon the necessarily mysterious subject of the nature of Deity. For the human mind is not content to think of God as a mere Monad. The Christian doctrine concerning God is primarily and essentially monotheistic. It does not disintegrate Deity into personified attributes, or localised powers, or deified heroes; yet, whilst it holds firmly the unity of the Divine Being, it regards God in the light of a Complex Personality.

The two sides of the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity are essential unity, and distinction, of a personal kind, within the unity. This doctrine may not, indeed, be regarded as an absolute ontology, in a philosophic sense, for the very nature of the subject makes this an impossibility for finite minds. It is a doctrine based upon positive revelation which is *relative* to human needs and circumstances. We may, however, make bold to say that what has been termed the "œconomic" Trinity (*i.e.* the Trinity as revealed in the "economy," or dispensation, of Divine grace in relation to man) points to, and

indicates, an "essential" Tri-unity in the Divine Being. At the same time we confess that the Divine Being in entirety cannot be known by man; for there is a reverent agnosticism accompanying the knowledge of God that comes by faith in what He has revealed, which is quite different from the rash agnosticism which, in asserting that God is unknowable, denies both the possibility, and the facts, of the revelation made.

The doctrine of the Trinity, as briefly stated in the first of the Thirty-nine Articles, is that in the "unity" of the Godhead there are "three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

There are four aspects of this doctrine which it is important to contemplate and to combine. These may be represented by the four terms, Historical; Mystical; Intellectual; Practical. Under the first head we note the connection between revealed *facts* and the development of the doctrine; under the second, we consider the relation of *faith* to the mysterious revelation made; under the third, we mark how *reason* analyses the contents of the revelation and formulises the doctrine; and fourthly, we observe how *conscience* applies the doctrine, and brings it

down from the metaphysical sphere of speculative and definitional theology into the sphere of everyday religious work and experience.

I. The doctrine of the Trinity is not the outcome of a mere metaphysical discussion. It "has grown out of faith in the *facts* of revelation." The Incarnation of the Divine Word, in fulfilment of various pre-intimations made in the history of the people of Israel, introduced into the world a new manifestation of God. Jesus, the Christ, spoke of Himself as the Son of Man and the Son of God; He called Himself the Sent of the Father, and claimed to be in intimate union with the Father; He spoke of the Holy Spirit in a manner which implied that Father, Son, and Spirit are essentially united in will, nature, and operation (see, especially, Jno. xvi. 13–15); and the remarkable "baptismal formula," which was given to Christ's disciples as one of the latest utterances of Jesus before His ascension into heaven, has been fitly termed "the climax of the evangelical history." This ONE NAME, in which stand co-equally united the appellations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the coping-stone of Christian theology, as taught by the lips of Christ Himself; and in what is signified by that Sacred Name we may perceive how intimately the redemption of man is con-

nected with the revelation of God by, and in, Jesus Christ.

All the "Trinitarian controversies" of the third century were the necessary result of the supernatural occurrence upon which Christian faith was founded, viz., the mission and incarnation of the Divine Word. The fact that Jesus the Messiah had claimed to be, and was recognised as, Divine, demanded some explanation. The explanation varied with the standpoint of those who tried to make it. Some, in their anxiety to assert the Deity of Christ, attenuated the distinction intimated by the three names within the one name into which Christians were baptized. Others, in their anxiety to maintain the unity of God, attenuated or denied the deity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit.

It is worthy of special notice that the evident intention of all the controversialists was to maintain the truth of the unity of the Divine Being; none wished to impugn or contradict it. That truth was considered by Christians as well as by Jews indisputable; but the person and teaching of Christ had introduced new dogmatic material, out of which the enlarged theological science had to be cautiously and gradually constructed. Some objectors to the doctrine of the Trinity speak as if

it were first invented in the fourth century. This is completely contrary to historical fact. The practicable belief in Christ as Divine inevitably and naturally led on to critical and speculative questionings, and it became the duty of the Church to formulate, so far as it might be possible to do so, the dogmatic result of the Scriptural revelations which had called forth those questionings.

The Arian controversy became the occasion of the most important dogmatic decision in the matter. The question which had to be faced was plainly seen to be this: Was Jesus Christ essentially Divine as well as human, or was He a creature of God, and, however excellent, not essentially Divine? The general belief of the Church, the general worship of the Church, the most important teachers of the Church had certainly regarded Jesus as both human and superhuman; but the crisis had not arisen for a dogmatic decision on the question of His Deity. That crisis had now come. The appeal was (and it is well that this should be recollected) to the Scriptures. The controversies of the previous century had opened out the various points on which decisive definition was needed. And the Nicene Confession of Faith was the answer. For a time, indeed, the Arian view prevailed in some quarters,

but it finally succumbed; and in spite of the corruptions and divisions of the Christian Church, first into East and West, then into Papal and Protestant, the Trinitarian theology has been a common feature of Christendom up to the present day.

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity, viewed historically, stands upon a foundation of fact; it is a legitimate inferential development from the revelations of God actually made to man in the Person of Jesus Christ; it involves, as a matter of course, metaphysical questions of extreme intellectual difficulty, but it is not a mere metaphysical speculation; and to object to it, as if it were only a philosophical puzzle unworthy of troubling our minds about, is the sign either of a superficial study of the subject, or of a prejudiced refusal to recognise facts because they involve intellectual difficulties outside of the ordinary field of research. The "historic faith" of Christendom is stated in the way of simple personal belief in the "Apostles' Creed;" its "theological" features come into greater prominence in the more technical formula which we call the "Nicene Creed," and a still more technical exposition of the doctrines of the Trinity, and of the Person of Christ, is to be found in the so-called

"Athanasian Creed." But the "theology" in each of them, whether only implied or more technically expressed, is no offspring of mere philosophic or theosophic speculation; it is the fruit of a personal faith in Jesus, as the Christ of God, who came from the Father, and having lived and died as a Man upon earth, rose from the dead and ascended into the unseen heavenly places. From this wonderful Person, and in His Personality, came that knowledge of the Divine Being which was, after long and varied discussion, formulated into the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

II. The doctrine of the Trinity is then, in the first place, a historically-developed doctrine which rests upon an induction from revealed facts. It is also, and necessarily, a mystical doctrine. That is to say, it does not admit of a purely intellectual apprehension or explanation. It transcends the compass of man's reasoning faculty. There is, first, an inherent mystery in the very nature of the subject dealt with. There is also a mystery of Divine interposition in the historical revelation which led to the doctrine being formulated. Moreover, the very process of mind whereby the revelation is first apprehended is one in which there is a blending of the emotional and intellectual powers; it is a faith which is primarily

receptive and only secondarily critical. It may be, I think, safely laid down as a general principle that religious faith precedes formulated theology. The faith which apprehends God and Divinely revealed truths is by no means, indeed, merely "sentimental;" it cannot be exercised or maintained without an "intellectual" basis; yet the emotional element makes itself felt before the critical faculty can fully operate. Faith in Jesus Christ as a Divinely-commissioned Messenger of God, faith in His Divine claims—such as Thomas expressed when he said, "My Lord and my God"—takes hold of the revelation, but does not then and there analyse its contents and formulate a dogma. It is an act of personal trust. It is an allegiance to an authority recognised as Divine. And this faith opens out the way for further knowledge of God, by bringing the soul and spirit of the believer into an intimate fellowship with the unseen God, as revealed in Christ, whereby the reality of God's relation to man, and of His communication with man, is felt, and Light and Life and Love become the watchwords of the disciple who leans on Jesus' breast. In the New Testament the terms Father, Son, and Spirit are felt to illumine each other. The Son reveals the Father; the Father sends the Son, and sends the

Spirit "in the name of" the Son; the Spirit is the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of truth. The central Personal Focus of the revelation of God is Jesus Christ; for "no man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him (ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο);" and it is through Him that both Jews and Gentiles "have access unto the Father in one Spirit." The well-known benediction with which the Apostle Paul closes his second Epistle to the Corinthians corresponds to the "baptismal formula" which closes the first Gospel; and "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is placed in sweetly significant parallelism with "the love of God," and the "communion of the Holy Ghost."

Search the New Testament through, and you will find that, whilst the dogmatic form of the doctrine of the Trinity has not yet been shaped, the spiritual substance of the dogma, in all its mystic force and meaning, is at the heart of the apostolic teaching concerning God. That teaching never contravenes the unity of God; yet, at the same time, in statements sometimes more, sometimes less, direct, it assumes everywhere the Divine Sonship of Jesus Christ, and the Divine personal operations of the Holy Ghost.

And if the faith which apprehends the doctrine, and the fact of the Incarnation on which the doctrine of God's Tri-unity depends, are "mystical," it is also quite evident that any endeavours to determine or define the Being of God must encounter intellectual difficulties in reasoning which, from the very nature of the topic, it is impossible to surmount. To construct any genuine doctrine of God's nature needs some real knowledge of God, and this can only come from revelation of Himself by Himself. Now in special revelation, as in "the order of nature," there is, primarily and ultimately, mystery. Physical science is surrounded by mystery, a region of inexplicability where analytical reasoning may not enter and classification of phenomena ceases. How much more must this be the case in "theology," *i.e.*, the "science of God."

The objection to the doctrine of the Trinity that it is a "mystical" doctrine is an unreasonable one, if it is meant to imply that because God cannot be wholly known or logically defined He therefore cannot be really and adequately known by a conjunction of faith with reason, or be so far defined and described as to admit of a spiritual apprehension of His perfect Being, which shall be intellectual up to the limits which the revelation

allows, and at the same time shall, in the power of devotion and trust, transcend definitions and logical limitations, and soar upwards into a communion with God which is ineffable.

Some definition and description were made possible by the special revelation in Christ Jesus; and the Trinitarian theology of the Catholic Church was the result. Yet we need not be afraid to admit that the "intellectual" side of the doctrine is necessarily incomplete, and involves "notions" which, as Barrow says, "may well puzzle our reason in conceiving how they agree, but should not stagger our faith in asserting that they are true; upon which we should meditate, not with hope to comprehend, but with disposition to admire, veiling our faces in the presence, and prostrating our reason at the feet of wisdom so far transcending us."

Those who cannot follow theological arguments and definitions can yet in adoration trust what they cannot by explanation define. They recognise the agreement of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost "in those three mighty words of favour to mankind, *Faciamus, Redimamus, Salvemus.*" They acknowledge Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, to be ONE GOD, whose nature of infinite power, wisdom, love, transcends knowledge. They rejoice

in one Divine personal Source of might and mercy, manifested in Jesus Christ, and sending streams of gracious helpful hope into their hearts by His Holy Spirit.

This "mystical" side of the doctrine which we are considering is an intelligible and reasonable feature of the "science of God," and must ever accompany the "intellectual" attempts to reason upon His nature and explain it, although it does not forbid or preclude those attempts. "For" (to quote Barrow once more) "divine incomprehensibility is one of those attributes which we are capable of knowing, and obliged to consider; and it is so far from hindering, as it doth promote His intelligibility. Is the ocean less visible, because, standing upon the shore, we cannot descry its utmost bounds? Is the fire less sensible, because we cannot endure the utmost degrees of heat? Does the inexhaustibleness of a rich mine forbid us to partake of its wealth, or the perennity of a fountain hinder us from quenching our thirst at it? May we not see the sun, because we cannot glare directly on him, nor pierce through the spacious orb of light?"

Doctrinal terminology of some degree of definiteness has been made possible by the material for knowledge given us in the Holy Scriptures,

especially in the New Testament, and they may, as we shall presently see, help to shape and give substantial form to our devotions, so that we shall not divorce thought from feeling, or reasoning from emotion, in our religion. Yet, after all, in such a subject, feeling, faith, emotion, must ever enjoy a larger range than can be given to the exercise of our finite understanding.

> "Where reason fails, with all her powers,
> There faith prevails, and love adores."

III. It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that there is no scope for the exercise of the *intellectual* as distinguished from the emotional faculties in "the things of God;" or to suppose that, when we speak of "the prostration of reason" before the majestic mystery of the Divine Being, we intend the abnegation of reason, or wish to prohibit the exercise of intellectual effort in discerning, and in defining, as far as may be possible, the nature of God.

We have already said that, as a general rule, religious faith precedes formulated theology; but no faith can be sustained without the formation of some definite theological propositions and definitions. "Dogmas of theology," says an able critical writer, are "translations into the language

of the intellect of religious instincts and aspirations." Mere sentiment, however pious and fervent, is not enough to maintain religion. An unlimited mysticism becomes the parent of fanatical and superstitious notions. Spiritual affections, as stirred by special revelations from God, need some framework, some vehicle, some form of intellectual expression, if they are to become permanent and practical motives of human conduct. And the dogma of the Holy Trinity was a useful formulisation of the general current of spiritual thought and feeling which the enlarged conception of the Divine Nature, introduced by the Christian religion, set flowing in the minds of those who accepted that religion.

Trinitarian doctrine was virtually accepted long before it was formulised; but its formulisation made the doctrine more fit for intellectual apprehension, and enabled it to be more readily handed down as a definite article of Christian belief.

The doctrine is neither "irrational," as the Unitarian sometimes urges, nor is it unimportant, as some say, who either do not like to face the intellectual effort required in handling so profound a subject, or have no taste for what they deem to be a mere speculative side of religion.

The doctrine is not irrational. It has, as we

have seen, and it cannot but have, a mystical and transcendental aspect; but it is the product of devout, patient, and careful reasoning upon the facts provided in Scripture. It is a logical inference from a comprehensive collation and colligation of revealed *data*. Human logic cannot, indeed, scale the height, or measure the proportions of the Divine Being; but our reason may, and must, be exercised in an explicative analysis of what is exhibited to it, so far as its power allows.

All scientific terminology is perplexing to an untrained mind; but it is not, therefore, useless. For the intelligent student, it directs attention to suggestive lines of thought, while it helps him to retain in compendious form a large range of ideas which it might be otherwise difficult to concentrate for intellectual purposes.

The terminology connected with the Arian controversy circles round the two terms, "BEING" (or "Essence") and "PERSON" (or "Subsistence"). The "Trinitarian" doctrine (which is, be it noted, always also a "Unitarian" doctrine) states that God is One Being, within the Unity of whom are Three Persons. But it is too often forgotten, in arguing about the doctrine, that the term "Person" is used in a technical sense, and

not in the ordinary acceptation of the word in which we speak of this or that particular person. By "three Persons in one God" the Trinitarian does not mean that there are three persons in one Person, according to the ordinary numerical way of computing separate individuals; he means that there are, according to what he considers to be the fairest and most consistent interpretation of the Scriptural *data* concerning the nature of God, three "subsistences" in one "essence." God is regarded by him as an Infinite Personality, containing within Himself three personal subsistences, to which the appellations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are assigned. The first of these appellations involves the notions of origin, source, cause, government, and does not present any great intellectual difficulty. The second appellation is a title of *relation*, whereby the idea of the manifestation of Absolute Deity in personal self-revelation is adumbrated. The revealed, and revealing, Word of God is a personal Subsistence in the Essence of Deity, and may be imaged for man as the Eternal Son of the Blessed Father. And the third appellation represents the personal Spiritual Influence which proceeds from Deity, whether conceived as Source or as Manifestation of the Divine glory, and is operative in all the

Divine energy (in-working), exhibited either in the natural or the moral sphere of things. It is not pretended that this doctrine of Trinity in Unity is an exhaustive description of God's Nature or Being, but the doctrine is put forth as a suggestive *résumé* of the Scriptural *data* concerning God, brought together and co-ordinated for the purpose of repelling vague or one-sided statements. By the doctrine of the Trinity, cautiously and reverently handled, our intellectual conception of God becomes more definite, and yet is not too narrow. We are saved, on the one side, from the Pantheism that confounds God and His creation together; and, on the other side, from the naked Deism which ignores the special revelations in the Scriptures, and from the Polytheism which tries to explain the complexity of God's being and work by personifying Divine attributes, or the forces and phenomena of the natural world. We maintain, on the one hand, the Essential Unity and Personality of the Divine Being; we recognise, on the other hand, as a revealed truth cognisable by reason, although transcending it, that in the one Divine Essence there is a triplicity of personal Subsistences, which together constitute, in co-equal and co-efficient combination, the ONE GOD whom we worship and adore.

Credo ut intelligam is the principle with which we are bound to start in our endeavours to obtain knowledge of God (as, indeed, faith of some sort must be the starting-point of all knowledge), but what we apprehend by means of faith we endeavour to understand more definitely, that we may believe more firmly. The intelligent believer who commences by acknowledging, "I believe in order that I may understand," will never shrink from the earnest resolve, "I will understand that I may believe." Yet it is evident that we cannot understand the Divine Essence in its fulness. The humility of awe expressed in Job's words when he recognises the littleness of man in the face of the wonders of Creative Power is surely applicable to all *intellectual* appraisement of the Being of God. What we can know so as to tabulate and define in theology constitutes "but the outskirts of His ways. And how small a whisper do we hear of Him! But the thunder of His power who can understand?"

IV. The *practical* view of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is that which is best adapted to win general acceptance, and to commend itself to men's minds as the truest and surest view of the Divine Nature to which we can attain. We cannot make a complete scientific theory about

God. It is *ultra vires* for men's finite intellect. We may, and should, formulise religious knowledge so far as the nature of the subjects embraced by it allows. Yet reality of religious faith is a more important thing than minute accuracy of theological definition; and many a mind which is constrained to stop short of technical theology can fully enter into the practical application of truths which are difficult to formulate. The theological writer, for instance, may speak of "one Divine Nature or Essence common unto Three Persons, incomprehensibly united and ineffably distinguished; united in essential attributes, distinguished by peculiar idioms and relations; all equally infinite in every divine perfection, each different from other in order and manner of subsistence." He may proceed to state "that there is a mutual inexistence of one in all, and all in one; a communication without any deprivation or diminution in the communicant; an eternal generation, and an eternal procession without precedence or succession, without proper causality, and dependence; a Father imparting His own, and the Son receiving His Father's life, and a Spirit issuing from both without any division or multiplication of essence" (Barrow). Such language is technical,

and only useful for the comparatively few who are competent to engage in metaphysical investigations. But every one who accepts the Bible as a Divinely-authoritative revelation of God's will and purposes can apply with practical profit to his own conduct what he reads there about God as the Father, and about Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and about the Holy Spirit. We are taught in the Scriptures to regard God as reflected in His personal relations to mankind; and in doing this we are not so hampered by our finiteness of intellect as in the mental effort to contemplate His essential Being. God, as the object of *thought*, is difficult to contemplate; God, as the object of *trust*, is delightful to commune with; and it is as the supreme object of trust that He is progressively revealed in the Bible to all who will humbly, seriously, and patiently ponder its statements. Throughout the Old Testament the Unity, Supremacy, and Eternity of the Divine Being, as the Personal Will which superintends and continually operates in the world created by Him, are prominently brought to view. The Messianic promises intimate a Divine Messenger to come; and repeated mention is made of the Spirit of the Lord as a vitalising and inspiring Power.

In the New Testament the Messiah, Jesus, is presented as the predicted Messenger of the Covenant, and as one who, while He is human, "born of a woman, born under the law," claims to be in a unity with the Father who sent Him. And Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit in a manner which co-ordinates the Spirit with the Father and Himself.

These revelations, as has been already noticed, constitute the authoritative dogmatic material out of which the doctrine of the Trinity was formulated in the Christian Church. And these Scriptural statements, in their practical aspect, are full of wholesome instruction for all who wish to live godly lives, whether or not they can pursue the more recondite paths of scientific theology. Take, for example, two passages in the New Testament; one, the familiar apostolic benediction already alluded to (2 Cor. xiii. 14); the other, an apostolic injunction recorded in the Epistle of Jude (verses 20, 21): "Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Now, notice how the doctrine of the Trinity, which lies at the heart of each of these passages, is applicable to the growth and

confirmation of the spiritual life in the believer. In the words of the well-known benediction we have the manifestation of Divine blessing in the person of Jesus Christ; the unseen source of the Divine blessing in God's love; the operation of the Divine blessing by means of the Holy Spirit: a Tri-une blessing which is the reflex of the Tri-une Being from whom all blessings come. We can note distinction together with combination —a varied aspect and shape of blessing (grace, love, communion), and yet an indivisible blessing, for the grace of Christ is the love of God, and the fellowship of the Spirit is inseparably connected with that grace and love.

In St. Jude's injunction, again, the central object of fruitful contemplation and healthy spiritual action is "the love of God," in which Christians are to guard themselves as in a strong, safe place; but how is it that they may do this? By building themselves up on the faith of Christ, and praying in the Holy Ghost, they keep themselves from evil in the consciousness of God's love thus revealed, and thus implanted in the heart, and look for a glorious consummation of bliss in the perfected salvation yet to be revealed.

The Christian who, instructed in this wise, takes the *practical* view of the doctrine of the

Trinity, will not find it difficult to answer, in a *practical* way, the objections of the "Unitarian," even although he may be incompetent to enter into the deeper speculations, and more subtle definitions, involved in the intellectual aspect of the doctrine. Dr. Channing, in one of the passages in which he opposes "Trinitarianism," objects to the doctrine because it derogates from God's infinite glory, (i.) by taking from God the idea of perfection; (ii.) by taking from God the idea of unity in operation; (iii.) by substituting the idea of a stern God for a loving Father, unsettling the conviction of God's paternal goodness. The practical Christian believer will answer, first, that he finds in the belief of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, a fulness of grace revealed which, so far from detracting from the Divine glory, and "dimming the splendours of the Godhead," makes it shine with more wonderful radiancy, as of the rainbow in which the constituent elements of light are beauteously blended, and yet distinguished. He will answer, secondly, that so far from the doctrine of the Trinity, as he has learned it, being one that "offers to the mind a strange compound of hostile attributes," and involves "irreconcilable ideas," it is one in which he gratefully recognises a gracious harmony

of one loving Will, uniting all that God is, as Father, Saviour, and Life-giver. He will answer, thirdly, that for him God, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the God of all comfort, and manifold grace, and that the Holy Spirit sheds in every believer's heart such a sense of the love of God as to certify a hope of God's glory which never shames him who entertains it. (Rom. v. 5.)

We have seen that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is well grounded in fact; mysterious in character; reasonable, on intellectual grounds; precious, in its spiritual use; and, when we compare it with any other "theology," we find it incomparably superior both in its substantial trustworthiness, and in its spiritual influence upon the mind and heart of those who genuinely accept it.

In the collect for Trinity Sunday we pray that we may be kept steadfast in the faith which acknowledges "the glory of the eternal Trinity," whilst "in the power of the Divine Majesty" we "worship the Unity." We feel that this doctrine concerning God is the highest and fullest revelation of Deity in His personal relations to mankind that has yet been reached. It is not "a relapse," as Dr. Channing most mistakenly

asserted, "into the error of the rudest and earliest ages, into the worship of a corporeal God;" it is, on the contrary, an advance from a more elementary into a riper and richer knowledge of the Divine Being. It is not a materialisation of the Godhead, but it is an opening out of access unto the Universal Father by the mediation of Christ through the inworkings of the Holy Spirit in our hearts; and is thus a doctrine which at once elevates humanity Godward, and glorifies the grace of God to man. We do not wish to insulate the dogma of the Trinity in its intellectual aspect from the devotion of faith, as if the mere assertion of the dogma were equivalent to a life of faith in God. We agree with what Bishop Jeremy Taylor said in a sermon on John vii. 17, before the University of Dublin, "showing by what means the scholars shall become most learned and most useful." "The good man," said the preacher, "that feels the power of the Father, and he to whom the Son is become wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, he in whose heart the love of the Spirit of God is spread, to whom God hath communicated the Holy Ghost the Comforter, this man, though he understandeth nothing of what is unintelligible, yet he only understands the mysteriousness of the

Holy Trinity. No man can be convinced well and wisely of the article of the holy, blessed, and undivided Trinity, but he that feels the mightiness of the Father begetting him to a new life, the wisdom of the Son building him up in a most holy faith, and the love of the Spirit of God making him to become like unto God." This witness is true. Not in the exactitude of our definitional theology, but in the earnestness of our devotional trust, have we the best understanding of God, who *tantum cognoscitur quantum diligitur.*

We close, then, this attempt at an exposition of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity with the prayer that God may keep us steadfast in this faith, and near to Him!

"O full of strong and tender love,
Who, though Thou reignest high above,
Dost look upon us graciously,
FATHER, we come to Thee.

O Thou who art 'the Way,' by whom
We are deliver'd from our doom,
Redeem'd from death, from sin set free,
JESUS, we come through Thee.

O holy Guide, without whose aid
We must in sin have ever stray'd.
Enlighten'd now, at liberty,
SPIRIT, we come by Thee.

We come, O GOD; our hearts we raise
In adoration, and in praise;
On us Thy mercy ever be,
Most blessed Trinity!"

THE ONE OBLATION OF CHRIST.

By the Right Rev. W. SAUMAREZ SMITH, D.D.,
Bishop of Sydney.

The Atonement effected by the death of Jesus Christ is the central point in the profound mystery of the Incarnation, and is itself a mystery within a mystery. That is to say, it is a Divine truth hidden from natural knowledge and research, but made known to those who believe in Christ, and so becomes a "revelation," although it is still a "mystery," having its roots hidden in the secret counsels of Divine love, and being capable of issues for good which are beyond our ken and definition. Yet the truth is so far made known to us as to be a sure foundation for faith, a mighty motive for conduct, and a consolation and a hope which satisfy our deepest spiritual cravings.

The word "atonement" means "reconciliation," and this is the rendering in the Revised Version of Romans v. 11, but by the use of the former word in the Old Testament it has come

to connote the expiation of sin, without which man's reconciliation to God could not take place. Christ's death was a reconciliation of man to God, because in that death the appointed sacrifice was offered which was to put away sin from human nature, as redeemed and restored in Christ. It was the one sin-offering which was to make all others needless. It explains and interprets the propitiatory idea exhibited in the wide prevalence of animal sacrifices as an essential part of worship, and it supplants the Levitical ritual of type and symbol by the spiritual reality which that ritual was designed to prepare for and pre-intimate.

The Church of England doctrine concerning the unique value of Christ's death, as "the one Oblation," which needs no repetition, tolerates no addition, and cannot have any rival, is expressed with a remarkable intensity of emphasis both in the Articles and in the Liturgy. The words of Art. xxxi. are, "The offering of Christ *once made* is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is *none other* satisfaction (*expiatio*) for sin *but that alone*." Parallel to this is the commencement of the Prayer of Consecration in the Communion

Service, which speaks of Christ being given of God's tender mercy "to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption, who made there (by *His one oblation of Himself* once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, *oblation*, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world . . ."

The reason for these emphatic statements is obvious. The false view concerning the Eucharist which regarded the Lord's Supper as a propitiatory sacrifice, to be again and again offered by the hands of priests, and regarded Christ as "immolated in an unbloody manner" in "the Divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the mass," was the crucial point of controversy in England in the Reformation period. The traditionalists held that the Sacrifice of Christ was repeated, and not merely commemorated, in the Eucharist; the reformers held that there was no such repetition; that the argument built upon the distinction between the bloody sacrifice on the Cross, and the unbloody sacrifice on the altar, was fallacious and contrary to Scripture; that the "offering of Christ" was a fact, once and for ever consummated upon the Cross, and that (to use words of Bishop Burnet) it is clear from what we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews that, "in the strictest sense of the word, Christ Himself is the only

Priest under the Gospel; and no less evident that His death is the only Sacrifice. We have but one *Priest*, and likewise but one *Sacrifice* under the Gospel; therefore how largely soever these words of priest or sacrifice may have been used, yet, according to the true idea of a *propitiatory sacrifice*, and of a priest that reconciles sinners to God, they cannot be applied to any acts of our worship or to any order of men upon earth."

The first light, then, in which the topic presents itself is necessarily a controversial one. This is so because of the mediæval errors which obscured, though they did not entirely obliterate, the truth concerning the efficacy and unique nature of the Sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world. We, as Protestant Christians, have to affirm, in contravention of the corrupted doctrine of the Eucharist which makes it a propitiatory sacrifice, that there has been only one Sacrifice for sins, and that it was consummated as an offering, when Christ was crucified, although the efficacious application of the benefits of that Sacrifice is of continuous power.

We need no other "oblation" in the sense of a propitatory offering for sin. Our own oblations are those of prayer, praise, almsgiving, self-surrender to God; but these are offerings which

have no propitiatory value, and are, indeed, only made acceptable to God because of that one oblation of Christ once made and never to be repeated. We affirm that the Christian's ONE altar is Christ's Cross; that the Christian's ONE sacrifice for sin is Christ's death; and that the Christian's ONE Priest is Christ Himself.

The Reformers of the sixteenth century were led back to this Scriptural view of the true doctrine of Sacrifice by the superstitious and pernicious effects of the sacerdotal view of the Christian ministry which showed themselves in the so-called "sacrifices of the masses, in which it was commonly said that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead."

But the particular polemic view, as against Romanist error, should be supplemented by a wider view of the relation which the Christian doctrine of the "One Oblation of Christ" bears to the whole history and theory of "sacrifice," as a widespread and almost universally-prevalent form of worship.

What is the meaning of the fact that sacrifices were considered so essential to worship in the different systems of religion? and why is it that such special and minute attention was paid to them in the Mosaic legislation and ritual? What-

ever conclusion may be reached as to the question whether there was a primal revelation, or not, concerning the proper method of sacrifice, the almost universally-accepted idea of sacrifice in religious systems, and the practice of animal sacrifices in particular, where the forfeited life of the victim was considered to be in some way pleasing to the Deity, indicate a subjective instinct in human nature of the need of propitiation. Homage, dependence, the desire to please a superior, the wish to avert wrath, are ideas which appear in the sacrificial *cultus* of many religions, and show a sense of responsibility felt to the Power, or Powers, above Nature. In the religion of Israel, what was distorted, or grotesque, or cruel in the heathen systems was solemnised and regulated; and the propitiatory significance of sacrifice was made more plain, and at the same time rescued from the ambiguous position which it occupied in the less-instructed minds of men who had no special revelation, and no Divinely-ordered ritual. Sacrifice was shown to be not a bribe whereby men appeased the capricious wrath of a hostile superior, but a mediatory rite, ordained by God, wherein the solemn confession of sin on man's part was met by the assurance of pardon and cleansing for the penitent worshipper from the

righteous God, who was the Redeemer of His people, and wished them to serve Him in holiness. The Jewish sacrifices, however, were but a preparatory and prophetic training for a deeper and more spiritual revelation of the true way of mediation between man as sinful, and God as the righteous Ruler and Redeemer. In Christ Jesus all that was hinted at and suggested in the priests, and altars, and victims of old, was fulfilled in a transcendent and wondrous mystery of grace. In the Christian dispensation "*we have an altar*," as the inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches. On this point I will venture to quote words recently uttered in a sermon preached at Cambridge upon that text. "The altar implies the priest, the victim, the sacrifice, and all the beneficial results that follow. Christ's death was at once the abolition of sacrifices and the glorification of sacrifice as the great mediatorial fact whereby God and man are made at one. Christ has been 'once offered to bear the sin of many,' and by His sacrifice has consummated the redemption of humanity and vindicated the righteousness of God. . . . 'We have an altar' as Christians; and the Sin-offering upon it makes all other sacrifices needless, as being either obsolete types or intrusive rites

that are insufficient to mediate between God and man. This is the One Sacrifice of the New Covenant, and it is a Sacrifice that cannot be participated in by those who cling to the now antiquated system of Levitical ritual, or by those who fail to perceive the spiritual significance of the Priesthood of Jesus. We have an altar in the Cross of Christ. And as we contemplate it by faith, we see our great High Priest bringing the appointed victim, offering the expiatory sacrifice, removing the guilt of sin from the congregation of God, and purifying unto Himself by the blood of the New Covenant a pardoned people, zealous of good works. We have a sacrificial altar. Let Jewish ceremonial give place; let Gentile superstition be abandoned! Our altar is now the only one needed, and the Sacrifice offered on it is unique in its nature, transcendent in its work, and of eternal efficacy for every worshipper among men."

The Scriptural doctrine concerning the death of Christ is misunderstood and misinterpreted when the idea of a SIN-OFFERING is lost sight of, and when the sacrificial aspect of the death upon the Cross is limited to the thought of a self-sacrifice of moral worth as an example, and of moral merit as a perfect submission to the Divine Will. That it is this is most true, and very significant; but it

is not enough. Christ's death, to have an adequate mediatorial value for sinful men in relation to God's holiness, and to the Divine law violated by human disobedience, must in some sense be a penalty paid. To attenuate the penal element in Christ's death into an insignificant factor is a diminution of Scriptural truth, and a dangerous lowering of those ideas of God's anger against sin, and of the enormity of sin in His sight, which are so plainly revealed both in the Old and in the New Testament.

When we speak of "the One Oblation of Christ," it is well to remove ambiguity from the use of the term "oblation." The term came to be used for the gifts which Christians offered as a congregation of worshippers; and it was then diverted from its general and metaphorical application into a name for the eucharistic office, and made to subserve the growth of that sacerdotal theory of the Christian ministry which ripened into "the Sacrifice of the Mass." We may, and do still, speak of "alms and *oblations*," but there is no propitiatory idea involved in this use of the word, any more than in the "sacrifices" of Heb. xiii. 15, 16. The "oblation of Christ" means His own oblation once offered on the Cross by Himself as the High Priest of the New Covenant; "the one offering

(προσφορά) by which He hath perfected for ever (εἰς τὸ διηνεκές) them that are sanctified;" "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (ἐφάπαξ);" "the one sacrifice for sins for ever," which, "when He had offered," "He sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet." "Christ . . . once offered (ἅπαξ προσενεχθείς) to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him unto salvation." These Scriptures most assuredly testify that the oblation of Christ is a *consummated* act, coincident with His sacrificial death; that it is an offering *for sin*, and not a mere exemplary act of obedience or resignation; and that those are in error who assert that the oblation needs to be re-presented again and again. The application of the virtue of the One Sacrifice is continuous; the blood, once shed, continually "cleanseth;" the offering, once made, is of permanent efficacy, and can be pleaded again and again before God, but it cannot be repeated, and it needs no repetition.

A theologian of deserved repute, in a recent article concerning the Melchisedec High Priesthood of our Lord, propounds a theory of the death of Christ which makes that death only a "subordinate part of the offering." In his anxiety to

avoid what he considers a narrow view of the Atonement, Dr. Milligan argues that the death of Christ was only "the initial step" of the offering, and that we should "think of the offering of Christ as going forward everlastingly." Such a statement militates against the Scriptural view of Christ's death as a completed sin-offering; is connected with a strained interpretation of the New Testament passages concerning the blood of Jesus, as pointing to mystic life rather than to actual death; and needlessly confounds the two distinct thoughts of an offering that has been once for all offered, and of the abiding fruit of the oblation once made. "When Jesus had given Himself a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, He ascended up on high and entered into the Holy of Holies not made with hands, and there appeared before God as an atonement for our sins" (Pearson). The oblation has been effected; and our great High Priest ever liveth to make intercession for us.

The practical value of the belief in Christ's finished work of expiation is great. It has an important bearing upon worship; upon work; upon the whole mental attitude of the believer.

Upon worship. — Those who believe that Christ's one sacrifice cannot be either rivalled or repeated—who rightly appreciate the oblation

as *unique*, both as regards time and as regards adequacy—will never add superstitious accretions of their own to mar the simplicity of the *cultus* which Christ has appointed, and will never lose confidence as to their access unto God.

Upon work.—Saved from superstitious additions to worship, those who hold the doctrine of the one oblation of Christ are also saved from "legalism." They are well assured that no meritorious labours or penances are required by God as atonement for sin. They do not work *for* salvation, but *from* salvation. They "work out" the salvation already given—with a trembling sense of responsibility and awe, indeed, because it is God who works in them, but yet also with joyous confidence, as "made full" in Christ, and knowing that they have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of their trespasses, according to the riches of God's grace.

Upon mental attitude.—Those who realise that "the Oblation of Christ" is a consummated and adequate propitiation for sin, never to be repeated—a central transaction in human history of God's redeeming and reconciling love which cannot be obliterated, and needs no repetition—are saved from morbid fussiness about their spiritual condition, and from that constant calculation, so

to speak, of their spiritual assets, which is at once the temptation and the plague of minds which are ill at ease, because they are trying to supplement with human emotions what they consider only an incipient clearing-off of accounts between them and their Divine Judge.

The complete remission of sins is the prominent feature of the New Covenant, as fulfilled in Jesus Christ and sealed by the Blood of His Cross, and "where remission of these is, there is *no more* (οὐκέτι) offering for sin."

Whichever aspect of the subject be taken—controversial, philosophical, or practical — it is one that claims very earnest and patient consideration, not only from Christian teachers and theologians, but from every Christian believer who wishes to understand the significance of the work and office of Christ as the One Mediator between God and men.*

There are signs in several quarters that "the old theology of the Cross" stands in danger not only of the avowed hostility of opponents, but also of well-meant depreciation by those who have an anxiety to escape from what they deem

* I would strongly recommend for thoughtful perusal an admirable argumentative exposition of one branch of the subject, entitled *Our High Priest in Heaven*, by Archdeacon Perowne (Elliot Stock).

a one-sided theory of the Atonement, and think, by a subtle interpretation of the passages which bear upon the sacrificial view of Christ's death, to improve upon the older view which perceives in that wondrous Sacrifice the concentration of the revealed truth that "Christ by substitutionary work and suffering has satisfied the righteousness of the wrath of God, and made for the love of God an open path" (Delitzsch). Those of us who still value and cling to that older theology should see to it that we do not, by pressing too exclusively the *penal* aspect of our Lord's sufferings, justify the charge of narrowness or one-sidedness. We should fully recognise the *ethical* aspect of Christ's death, the great moral worth as well as the complete expiatory value of the Sacrifice there offered. We should avoid a rigid, over-dogmatic, or superficial handling of so deep a subject as the Atonement. We should gratefully welcome all that helps to throw light upon the various lines of thought involved in the consideration of this momentous subject; but we cannot give up that which we believe to be the plain interpretation of what is revealed in Scripture for men's instruction and salvation. The comfort which is connected with a simple belief in "the forgiveness of sins," as secured by the

One Oblation of Christ, is inestimable; and although it is true that such spiritual comfort ought to be cautiously administered, so as not to raise presumptuous hopes, we may not, in fear of the abuse of it, withhold from sinful men the cordial which God has freely and fully provided in Christ. We may not, because one aspect of the Atonement may have been sometimes unduly pressed, therefore proceed to merge it into an indefinite mysticism, which can bring no peace to the burdened soul of a contrite sinner. There is, doubtless, deep truth in what has recently been ably put forth, that the possibility of Redemption is involved in the natural fellowship of man, and that the unity of humanity in Christ is a unity of redemptive efficacy. But religion is needed for individual souls as well as for collective humanity; and no mere philosophic view of Christ's death has such power to move, or pacify, or purify the individual conscience, as the simple revealed fact that God, the Holy and the Righteous, has accepted the once-offered oblation for sin by which Christ, "set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood," vindicated the righteousness of God and secured a universal redemption for mankind. The accomplishment of that atoning act *for us* is the ground

upon which Christian faith builds the heavenly hopes *within us*. This act, once and for ever done, is, in a sense, *outside* of men, for it is beyond the power of any mere man to have devised or done; but as accomplished by Him who is both divine and human, it reveals the truth of the "mystic union" which knits together God and man in Christ, and we learn that the Divine appointment and acceptance of that ONE OBLATION means a way of access to God opened out for human nature corrupted, in human nature reconciled and restored.

"THE INCARNATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

By the Rev. C. H. WALLER, M.A., Principal of St. John's Hall, Highbury.

"The Right Faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man."

"God, of the substance of His Father, begotten before the worlds: and Man, of the substance of His mother, born in the world."—*Athanasian Creed.*

"Whereof is One Christ, very God and very man."—*Article II.*

"Made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which He was clearly void, both in His flesh and in His Spirit."—*Article XV.*

"Who by the operation of the Holy Ghost, was made very man of the substance of the Virgin Mary His mother; and that without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin."—*Proper Preface upon Christmas Day.*

"The Son of man."—*Himself most frequently.*

"*Te Deum laudamus: Te Dominum confitemur.*"

The Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ was the subject of unquestionable prediction before it came to pass. The fact itself was the first thing that interpreted the prophecies at all clearly. And the Incarnate Lord Himself, speaking on earth and from Heaven, was the Only One to interpret the fact. It is not, as yet, fully understood. For it is a link in a series of events not yet concluded. And even those portions which

are already matter of history belong partly to the unseen world. The Incarnation is the first link in that chain which St. Paul calls "the mystery of godliness." "God was manifested in (the) flesh, justified in (the) spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the nations, believed on in the world, received up in (not 'into') glory" (1 Tim. iii. 16).

I cannot (unhappily) cite this verse without some allusion to present controversy. As to the *text*, I read "GOD," not "which," or "who," or "He who;" and I read it on the authority of 300 Greek MSS., bearing testimony to the consent of the Universal Church. I read it, secondly, because I could not accept the Revised Translation, even if I accepted the revisers' text. I cannot so far unlearn what I was taught of Greek grammar in my childhood, or what I have learned by study of the Greek Testament ever since, as to translate ὃς ἐφανερώθη, κ.τ.λ., by "He who was manifested," &c. The Greek for that would be ὁ φανερωθεὶς in such a sentence, and according to Greek Testament usage. Thirdly, the school that assigns the greatest weight to the revised reading and translation seems now to incline towards that scale of opinions concerning the humanity of our Lord Jesus which count Him, to say the least, an

imperfect Witness—a less perfect witness than some modern critics to the truth of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. So profound is the mistrust with which I regard this sort of theology, that it has absolutely destroyed my confidence in the criticism on which it is based. I regard the old reading as established beyond all question, and I read 1 Tim. iii. 16 with the received text and the Authorised Version. And I can make no compromise about either the translation or the text.

Let me now return to the interpretation. And let me say, further, that I receive the *order* of the clauses of that text as historically correct. I accept without hesitation the alternative which startled Dr. Vaughan in his first sermon in *Authorised or Revised*, p. 8, "God was manifested in the flesh." "So far well. But 'God was justified in the Spirit. God was seen of angels.' . . . God was received up into (but why not allow us the true translation, 'in'?) glory. Does all this commend itself as a form of expression scripturally and theologically appropriate? To some minds, habituated to such thought, there is a ring in it not quite sound;" and so on.

If any habit of the human mind whatsoever is to decide whether the text of Scripture, as received

by the Church for twelve centuries, has the "ring" of soundness or not, clearly these "habituated minds" must take some higher place than that which our Article assigns to the Church itself as a "witness and keeper of Holy Writ." If the testimony of 300 Greek MSS., all of them older than the invention of printing, tells us that so the Church has kept what the Apostles delivered, what has any individual opinion as to the "ring" of "soundness" to do with it? Who are we, that should presume to judge what the "ring" of Scripture ought to be, or not to be? I protest against the introduction of this principle—the chief principle on which the theory of the most recent critical text of the Greek Testament is based. I protest the more, because there is now some distinct indication as to whither this sort of guidance is likely to lead. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Many years ago I found in this text, as we have received it, matter for the deepest study and most interesting thought on the subject of our Lord's incarnation. To my mind it opens out the history of all the ages. For I see first that—

1. *God was manifest in the flesh* (manifest to the world), from Bethlehem to Calvary.

2. *God*, thus manifested, *was justified in spirit*

on the Cross. I know no more profound description of the death of Christ. But I cannot deal with this clause now. See Romans vi. 7, margin or Greek.

3. *God*, thus manifested, and thus justified, *was seen of angels*, probably both good and evil angels, each in due time, from the moment He entered the world of spirits by His death until the opening of the next scene in the great mystery.

4. *God*, manifested in flesh, justified in spirit, and seen of angels, *was preached unto the nations* (not Gentiles only), from the day of Pentecost and until now. This is the present dispensation, in which we preach Christ incarnate, crucified, risen and ascended, "angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto Him," *until the end come.*

5. *God*, thus manifested, justified, seen, and preached, *is* at last *believed on in the world.* I remark here that *all* the verbs in the sentence are in the aorist tense; that is, in that timeless tense which describes the entire action from his standpoint who sees it as complete. It is not described by St. Paul as already completed, or even as in progress. He simply delineates the whole mystery from the standpoint of Him whose mystery it is. I need not say that the accomplishment of this

fifth stage of the mystery is future. I must not further enlarge the field of present discussion by raising the question how it will come to pass. Lastly,

6. *God*, thus manifested, justified, seen, preached, and believed, is *received up in glory*. Not alone, for the "mystery of godliness" is then consummated. Surely not a mystery to be learned by the Son alone, who "is in the bosom of the Father," and who always "declared Him" (John i. 18). No. But God, thus manifested, justified, preached, and believed, with all who are thus initiated into the mystery of godliness, and made "partakers of the Divine nature," is "received up *in glory*," i.e., *in the Divine likeness*, wherein God predestined man to be from the beginning of creation. Thus "the mystery of godliness" includes not only the personal manifestation of our Saviour, but all its results and consequences up to the complete salvation of His Body among mankind. And it sets forth, as the first step to this bringing of many sons unto glory, the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If I am not utterly mistaken in the meaning of this great passage, it will be seen that I could not open my subject without referring to it. Nor could I refer to it without reading it. Nor could

I read it without construing it to the best of my power.

Having thus read the text, I can state, as St. Paul states it, the ultimate end and purpose of the Incarnation. It was and is, in one word, *godliness.* To show what is the true duty of the creature to his Creator, God Himself has taken the creature-form. He took it as chargeable with sin and tempted to sin (though not as sinful), that He might justify and cleanse it from sin entirely. He has subsequently glorified it, so that it may "have dominion over the work of His hands," and bring all His creatures, in so far as they are reasonable, to render Him reasonable service, "that God may be all in all."

That godliness is indeed a mystery we may see by this fact, that God Incarnate is alone able to accomplish it, and to manifest clearly what it is. Nothing less than God's own ideal of worship, service, and obedience will really satisfy Him. He has shown that He will Himself worship, serve, obey, and even die for the disobedient, rather than rest satisfied with less than His ideal. He "hath long patience for it," and will spend whole centuries in the dispensations that work it out. But "hath He said, and shall He not do it? Hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"

The Incarnation holds the first place in the series of these Divine labours, wrought in order that man, made in the Divine image, may attain the Divine likeness too. May we not say that He who said "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness, and let them have dominion" (Gen. i. 26)—intending, as the Psalmist clearly shows, to "put all things under his feet" (Ps. viii. 6), and meaning *all, except Himself* (Heb. ii. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 27)—must have then foreseen and provided for the Incarnation by which this shall come to pass? And if He foresaw the Incarnation as *necessary*, must He not also have foreseen what made it necessary—the failure of man to attain the Divine likeness without a Fall? And if He foresaw the Fall, He must also have foreseen the death which retrieved the Fall, and the Resurrection which provided a Last Adam to replace the first. And is not "Let Us make," really a covenant between the Father and the Son—the everlasting covenant, as it is so often called?

And at this point we reach another great certainty; that, though the Incarnation holds the first place in the order of events which work out the mystery, its place is not central, and it does *not of itself form the Gospel* which must be

"preached to the nations." If it were so, surely the text must have been framed on this wise, "God was manifested in flesh, preached unto the nations." It is not so. We preach not "God manifest in flesh" only, but "justified in spirit, seen of angels," too. The Incarnation gave us only "the Son of man," as He Himself always claimed to be; *i.e.*, the heir of the dead and fallen Adam, his lawful representative, to redeem his lost estate, and to "raise up the name of the dead on his inheritance." But death alone discharged our fallen manhood from its debts, our lost estate from its incumbrances. Resurrection gave us a second Man, a last Adam, a "Son of man glorified," and "God glorified in Him."

The Incarnation without the death of Christ and His resurrection is not the Gospel. It cannot rightly be called "the centre of gravity" of the Christian system. The centre of gravity of a chain of six links should fall between the third and fourth. In 1 Tim. iii. 16, that is just where the "Seen of Angels" is about to be "preached to the nations;" *i.e.*, at the coronation of our slain and risen and ascended Lord. Surely the centre of gravity of the Christian system is the point where it is joined to its anchor, "which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner

is for us entered, even JESUS." "It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Turning to the Incarnation of our Lord, we have at once three views of it—(1) In *Prophecy;* (2) In *Fact;* (3) In *Doctrine; i.e.*, in the interpretation of the fact.

(1) *In prophecy* we see man designed at first after God's likeness; and, after he fell, a Seed promised who should crush his deceiver's head. That Seed is recognised in the line of Seth, Abel's substitute; promised as the Seed of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah; afterwards of David; to be born of a virgin, and to "come forth from Bethlehem," a "Son given unto us, whose name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace;" who must appear within a certain time after the restoration of Jerusalem from its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. Such are the chief predictions, to us familiar but by reason of the event. For

(2) *The fact* itself, instead of being at once recognised as the fulfilment of prophecy, was "a stone of stumbling" in every detail of its accomplishment. The more closely we consider the

Gospel narrative, the more impossible do we find it to believe that the conception of a God-man had any place in the national mind of Israel at the time of the Nativity. What they did expect the Christ to be is not an easy question to answer. Perhaps they had not clearly defined their own anticipations. But, from the argument in the first two chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is difficult not to think that they must have expected an angel rather than very God or very man. How He could be David's son, except by birth, is a question in itself easier to a Jew than to a Gentile. But their absolute silence when our Lord questioned them as to the meaning of Ps. cx. 1, and their utter inability to allow that one "being a man" could "make Himself God," show clearly that their conceptions of the promised Messiah were not that He would be "very God and very man."

The question asked by the Magi, "*Where is He that is born* King of the Jews?" (Matt. ii. 2) was, in fact, the occasion of the other question, "Where is the birthplace of the Messiah?" *Once asked*, with the Old Testament in view, *there is only one possible answer*; that which was given by the Sanhedrin when consulted by Herod, from Micah v. 2. But the very fact that Herod

called the Sanhedrin together to answer, shows that *the question was itself a novelty*, and *the answer not generally known*. Imagine Convocation assembled to discuss the question where the chief centre of millennial worship is to be. In Jerusalem, of course, *if there is such a thing*. No other answer is possible, if you believe that the Millennium will ever be. I doubt much whether the chief priests and scribes of the people were assured that the Christ would really be *born* at all. The Magi, however, did not ask that question. They only asked, *Where* is He *that is born?* That He would come, no Jew doubted. But that He would come by *birth* was another matter. That some one would be born of David's seed, who would be the Messiah, they may have thought possible. That the anointing would descend upon Him would also follow. And He must be "the Angel of the Covenant in whom they delighted" (Malachi iii. 1). But that *the Word*, or Son of God, would be *made flesh* they evidently never dreamed.

The hostility of Herod and Jerusalem prevented the discovery. Although the fact was placed within reach of persons at the two extremes of the social scale—the humblest at Bethlehem, and the highest in Jerusalem—the knowledge did not

spread. The shepherds who verified the fact could not publish it effectively. The supreme powers did not verify it at all. Herod, indeed, ordered the wise men to bring him word again. But, strange to say, *not one of the great men* of Jerusalem seems to have accompanied the Magi in their search. *Why not?* There is but one answer. They did not think it worth while. The fact speaks volumes as to the *incredulity* of Israel at that time. In the result, however, He who was born at Bethlehem became Jesus of Nazareth, "separated (Nâzîr) from his brethren," as "the Son of Joseph" might well be. And this fact increased the difficulties of belief for Israel. Those who were prepared to recognise the Son of David by His works saw no difficulty. "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David," was the cry of the blind. Those who had eyes to read the prophets could not see how the Christ should come from Galilee. The discovery that Bethlehem was the right place, being followed by no national act of faith, became the occasion of fresh stumbling. In our Lord's lifetime, this perplexity appears never to have been generally cleared up.

(3) The fact itself, however, even when admitted as it must have been by His parents, did not suggest its own explanation. Certain as they

were that He was man, they by no means saw that as Christ He must also be God. "About My Father's business" was a saying not understood by them. And even in the last six months of His public ministry His brethren were still sceptical. "There is no man that doeth anything in secret, and He Himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world" (John vii. 4). "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." But our Lord's retirement was not accepted as a proof of His Deity,

It is well known that the Gospels of St. Luke and St. John give prominence severally to the human and Divine aspects of His earthly life. But nothing short of His own express testimony, confirmed by Divine sanction beyond dispute, could be accepted in evidence that He was very God. Neither the assertion nor the testimony are lacking. Three times over did the voice from heaven acknowledge Him as the Son of God. (1) At His baptism; (2) at His transfiguration; and (3) on the last day of His public ministry (John xii. 28), most likely outside Jerusalem. For the Greeks were still "coming up" (verse 20, Greek), when they sought to see Him. This testimony, combined with His own express claim to be Son of God, and confirmed by His oath before the High

Priest, cannot be gainsaid. Either He was very God, or He was not even a "godly" man. "The mystery of godliness" is decisive here.

To put this into words is comparatively easy. To grasp its meaning, or acknowledge it as a believer, is quite another thing. The more we believe, the more entirely do we accept St. Paul's statement, "None can say that Jesus is *the Lord*, but by the Holy Ghost." The first line of our *Te Deum* is impossible without His aid. What Mary of Bethany felt when, without one recorded word, she anointed the feet of Jesus with nard so costly, still keeping silence in the midst of reproach; what Thomas felt when he fell at the feet of the risen Saviour to say "My Lord and my God," this is more than can be expressed by human lips. The heart overflows, but the mouth cannot utter, what it is to see Jesus to be "very God and very Man."

One thing, however, is too plain to need interpretation or exposition. "The Word of God" in His dealing with the Scripture is utterly and entirely above the level of prophets, apostles, or angels themselves. He alone "expanded the *mind*" of the disciples (a creative act) to understand the Scriptures. He only could *point* beforehand to His own fulfilment of all that was

written concerning Himself. He alone spoke of things secret between Himself and His Father, things at that time known to no other, *e.g.*, the treachery of Judas before it was apparent, as taking place "that the Scripture might be fulfilled" (Jno. xvii. 12). Who else ever spake forth His dying words, "knowing that all things were accomplished, *that the Scripture might be perfected*" (Jno. xix. 28)? Who else has ever dwelt on earth amongst us, that could be called "*full of grace and truth?*"

I cannot find words to express the repugnance and the indignation with which I regard the revival of that doctrine, call it Kenosis or what not, which holds that our Lord in His relation to Old Testament Scripture was as other men were, neither more accurate nor better informed. What, then, did He mean by His saying, "I am the truth?" Why is His Name called "The Word of God?" What does *truth* in the New Testament mean? That which forgets nothing, that which ignores nothing (ἢ οὐδενὸς ἐπιλανθάνεται, ἢν οὐδὲν λανθάνει), *that is truth* (ἀλήθεια). How, then, could it possibly *escape His notice*, He being very God, if the common view of Scripture taken by His disciples were mistaken? How could He, *in truth*, avoid the responsibility of setting it

right? How *can* I consent to the thought that He knew less about Jonah, for example, than some modern critic? Is this insanity, or blasphemy, or what is it? Disguise the theory under what terms or technicalities we may, it is a denial of our Lord's veracity and of His Deity alike.

"Perfect God and perfect man;" in perfect unity, yet without fusion of the two natures into anything that is not either of the two. Can we analyse it, can we describe it? What are we the better if we do? We can say that man is body, soul, and spirit; and that, as Man, our Lord was all these. We can say, further, that "God is Spirit," and that in all the fulness of the eternal Spirit He was very God. Of this He did not "empty Himself," whatever was His outward form. We may reasonably conjecture that the contact or union of the two natures was where the spirit of the man was conjoined with the Spirit of God. We may also say that though this spirit, if considered apart from the Deity, must have possessed every natural human quality, and whatever in ordinary cases constitutes human personality among the rest (unless *that* be diabolical), yet the directing Personality of our Saviour was His Godhead, not His manhood, throughout.

When we have said this we may well ask whether we understand any the better how He who never slumbers was in the hinder part of Peter's boat asleep on the pillow; or how the Man walked upon the water, or bade the sea be still. The simplest expression of belief seems ever the best, "Although He be God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ." How can we think of His acts except as the acts of man without God firstly and the acts of God without man secondly, and then put the two together, and say that in each act God and man acted in perfect unison, each after His kind? I confess I cannot think otherwise. Yet all this while it must be remembered that the manhood which we so think of has given place to another. The psychical Body is now exchanged for the spiritual; the living soul for the quickening Spirit, in the resurrection-world. And these two make the *last Adam*, with which there remains, "yesterday and to-day and for ever," the changeless and infinite God. The doctrine of the last Adam belongs not to the Incarnation, but to the Resurrection. Into that province I must not enter. I fear I have already transgressed all reasonable bounds.

Only two points remain on which it seems needful to offer any observations. One is the

subject of our Lord's *growth*. The other is *His genealogy*.

As to His growth, I should like to refer to a note in Bishop Ellicott's Hulsean Lectures on the Life of Christ, Third Lecture, p. 86. He there says, "While we may certainly recognise a gradual and progressive *disclosure* of the Lord's *Divine* wisdom, we must certainly . . . . recognise a regular development and *increase* in the wisdom and grace of the *reasonable* soul . . . . the true and complete statement being (here I translate from the Latin), 'that Christ, as regards Divine Wisdom, that is, the wisdom which pertains to Him as God, made no progress; but as regards human wisdom, that is, the wisdom which pertains to Him as man, made real progress, in the *manner* of a man, but beyond the *measure* of man.'" (The real source of the quotation does not seem quite certain.)

We may not overlook the fact that whatever of mental error and obscurity in us is due to the corruption of our nature by the Fall—in fact, to the actual presence of sin—in Christ had no place. The words of unfallen Adam seem to have been oracles of God. In this view, consider carefully Gen. ii. 23, 24, as *one* saying, in the light of its acceptance by our Saviour as a Divine utterance

(Matt. xix. 4, 5). I am by no means sure that to charge our Lord with any ignorance as to what was, or was not, God's Word, is not as great an offence against His humanity as against His Deity itself. (See also *South's Sermons*, vol. i., sermon 2, p. 25.) Can a sinless being err in speech?

As to our Lord's *genealogy*. On the face of the Gospels, both the genealogy given by St. Matthew and that given by St. Luke are genealogies of Joseph, not of Mary.* I know no principle which reconciles them, except that which Eusebius gives in his citation from Papias, Eus. *Eccl. Hist.* i. 7. And in this solution there are errors of detail, so that it is not absoluely satisfactory. Still, in principle it is likely to be right. The explanation of the two genealogies appears to me to be substantially this. Take St. Matthew's first. He is not giving our Lord's personal genealogy, but that of Joseph. For he says (Matt. i. 16), "Jacob begat *Joseph the husband* of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." Anticipating the objection, But Joseph was not His father, he adds at once that "the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise," and proceeds to tell us how Joseph was divinely compelled to make Mary his wife, before the birth of her Son; who thus

* One friend of mine maintains that they are the same.

became, *in law*, a son of Joseph. Moreover, He appears to have been a *younger* son (see Lightfoot on the *Brethren of the Lord*), and yet a legal first-born, because He was His *mother's first child*, being a *male*. Like Joseph and David, Judah and Abram, Shem and Seth, He was a younger son, but still Joseph's son by the law of Israel, and heir by that Divine entail which so often caused the elder to serve the younger.

Thus the inheritance of Abraham and David, through Joseph, passed to Him. The mention of the sins of His ancestors in this first genealogy seems to call attention to the debts chargeable on the inheritance that fell to His lot, and to tell us, in the first page of the Gospel, that He must "bear their iniquities." St. Luke's genealogy does but trace the inheritance further back, and charge Him with the liabilities of Adam, the fallen son of God. St. Luke only makes Him "as was supposed," *i.e.*, lawfully accounted (the passive of νομίζω being somewhat exceptional in N.T.) "the son of Joseph," but not so naturally.

The strangest point in the whole matter is that we cannot be absolutely certain of His mother's parentage from the Gospel itself. St. Matthew says nothing whatever about it. The legal sonship is more to him than the natural. St. Luke's lan-

guage is almost tantalising by its approximation to what we want to know. "A virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David," *may* mean that Mary as well as Joseph was of that family. But does it *necessarily* imply this? "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David" (Luke i. 32) goes much closer. But we cannot forget that Mary was *already* espoused when this was spoken; that her son must therefore be Joseph's son also, by law, and so heir of David. Is it quite certain that the angel *must* have intended more than this? *If it is*, Mary's descent from David is stated in the Gospels. If not, St. Peter is the first witness (Acts ii. 30-32). St. Paul's testimony is also clear (Rom. i. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 8). But the obscurity of the descent of Mary, the Lord's mother, is one of the most curious features of the Gospel narrative of the Nativity. It almost seems as though it were matter of little moment, except for the fulfilment of prophecy, who our Lord's mother was. If He be "*very God and very man*," that is enough. If He be competent to undertake Adam's responsibilities, and to recover his lost estate, let that suffice us. No heredity could of itself mar or make His ability for His redeeming work.

JUSTIFICATION.

By the Rev. Canon HOARE, M.A., Vicar of Holy Trinity, Tunbridge Wells.

It is quite impossible to imagine a more important subject than this. I do not say that all persons feel its importance, but, to conscientious men, who are really struggling after righteousness, it is of overwhelming interest. There has seldom lived a man more respectable and more respected than Job; all classes looked up to him; he was just, virtuous, and honourable—more than that, he was religious; but it all failed him when he was brought face to face with God; his respectability could not help him, and even his religion failed to give him peace, so that in utter hopelessness he asked the question, "How can a man be just with God?"

It is our business here to study God's answer to this question. It is quite clear that He alone can give an answer, for He alone can reveal His own counsels of mercy. I will not, therefore, quote any human document as decisive on a question which can be decided by Him alone, but if we

look for human statements we shall find it very hard to discover anything better than that given in Article XI. of the Church of England. This article leads to the consideration of two subjects.

What is meant by Justification, and in what way can this justification be applied to the sinner?

1. What then do we mean by Justification? It is clearly something far beyond forgiveness. According to the article, it corresponds much more closely with acquittal. The article is headed with the words, "Of the Justification of Man," and opens with the words, "We are accounted righteous before God."

A forgiven man owes his life to mercy, but an acquitted man owes his life to righteousness; so the justified man is not merely forgiven in mercy, but he is accepted by God, and God is not merely faithful but just to forgive him his sins (1 John i. 9). Thus Hooker, in his great sermon on Justification by Faith, makes the distinction very clear in the words, "Then, although in ourselves we be altogether sinful and unrighteous, yet even the man which is impious in himself, full of iniquity, full of sin, him being found in Christ through faith, and having his sin remitted through repentance, him God upholdeth with a gracious eye, putteth away his sin by not imputing it, taketh quite away

the punishment due thereunto, by pardoning it, and accepteth him in Jesus Christ, as perfectly righteous, as if he had fulfilled all that was commanded him in the law; shall I say more perfectly righteous than if himself had fulfilled the whole law?"

And Hooker does but echo the words of Scripture, for this is exactly what is taught us by St. John when he says, "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, even so are we in this world" (R.V.). Those words teach us the marvellous fulness of the love of God in Christ Jesus, and show that this justification is so complete that even in the midst of the awful solemnities of the day of judgment we may meet Him with a holy boldness, in perfect peace, assured of our acceptance in His sight. They teach us also that this wonderful gift is not reserved till the day of judgment, but that it is enjoyed even now while we are living this present life, for he adds, "Because as He is, even so are we in this world." It is not merely something to be enjoyed when we die or rise again for judgment, but something which we may enjoy day by day, and hour by hour, in which we may walk with God through common life, and through which we may look

peacefully up to our Father in heaven, happy in the thought that in Christ Jesus we are accepted, accounted righteous, and beloved.

But how is it possible that a sinful man, one sinful in nature, in thought, in word, and in act, can thus be accepted as righteous by a perfectly just and holy God?

(1) It certainly cannot be through his own righteousness, for all who know anything of their own heart will be ready to agree with the question of David, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"

(2) Nor can it be through what is called sometimes inherent righteousness, or, as it might be better expressed, through the righteousness wrought in us by the grace of God. While we may most reverently thank God for the grace and mercy shown to us under the new covenant, according to which He does write His law in our hearts and put it into our minds, I cannot believe it possible that any awakened man can ever think for a moment that he has in himself, either by grace or nature, such a character as can ever constitute a righteousness before God. I thoroughly agree with that grand passage of Hooker in which he says, "I will only make a demand; if God should yield unto us, not as unto Abraham, if

fifty, forty, thirty, twenty—yea, or if ten good persons could be found in a city, for their sakes this city should not be destroyed; but, and if He should make us an offer thus large; search all the generations of men since the fall of our father Adam, find one man that hath done one action which hath passed from him, pure, without any stain or blemish at all; and for that one man's only action, neither man nor angel shall feel the torments which are prepared for both. Do you think that this ransom, to deliver men and angels, could be found to be among the sons of men? The best things which we do have somewhat in them to be pardoned." And so, while we thank God from the bottom of our heart for the blessed work which He does accomplish in our souls, we give up all thought of producing any one act that can stand the heart-searching scrutiny of a perfect and holy God, and are quite satisfied that we can never be justified even by the work of grace in our own hearts.

(3) I am brought, therefore, to the conclusion of the Article, "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The principle of that statement is that, being accepted in Christ, we are accounted righteous in His righteousness. It

cannot be better explained than by the words of St. Paul, 2 Cor. v. 21, "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." In those words we read of a double imputation, the one following the other; there is the imputation of sin to the Saviour, "He hath made Him to be sin for us," and this leads to the imputation of righteousness to the sinner, a righteousness no less than the righteousness of God Himself, for the words are "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." A moment's thought will serve to convince us that the two imputations must be of the same character, and that we are made the righteousness of God in the same sense as that in which He was made sin. It cannot, therefore, mean an actual inherent perfection, but must mean an imputed righteousness, as it was under the burden of imputed sin that our blessed Saviour shed His precious blood.

There is one word in the Article to which it may be well to draw further attention. Some people seem to think but little of a word, but great truths are often wrapped in little words, and so it is here, for that one short word "only" is of most important significance. It is inserted in this Article in direct opposition to the Church

of Rome. In 1547 Rome had decreed as follows: —"If any man shall say that men are justified either by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ *only*, or by the remission of sins *only*, to the exclusion of grace and charity which is infused in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and is inherent in them; or also that the grace of God by which we are justified is *only* the favour of God, let him be anathema."

This decree taught that the justification was partly through imputed righteousness and partly through righteousness inwrought in the soul by grace—the decree confused the two things, and declared its anathema on any one who should maintain that justification depended on imputed righteousness alone. So the Church of England boldly challenged Rome's anathema. It could not presume for one moment to mix up anything found in man, even though it might be the work of grace, with the perfect, spotless, and eternal righteousness of God, and maintained, as it has maintained ever since, and must maintain so long as it is a true branch of the true Church, that we are accounted righteous *only* for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Who can ever express the unspeakable blessing of such imputation, and who can ever estimate

the privilege, the marvellous privilege, of being actually accepted in the Beloved, and not only pardoned but beloved with the love which the Father bears to Christ Himself? But such is the privilege of each child of God, who, being redeemed and incorporated into Christ Jesus, is made one with the Saviour, and so is justified in the righteousness of God.

But it is plain that the gift is of so wonderful a character that nobody can be surprised if the guilty sinner regards it as quite out of his reach and is disposed to say, "It is wonderful, it is gracious, it is Divine, but it is so high that I cannot attain unto it." I believe there are many who look at it with admiration and earnest longing of heart, but who regard it as something quite out of their own reach, although they believe it to be enjoyed by others. It is necessary therefore for us to consider carefully the second great division of our subject.

II. In what way can this justification be applied to the sinner—or, in other words, in what way can the blessing be made our own? Now, if we closely examine this most important question, we shall see that it clearly consists of two parts.

In what way does God bestow it? And in what way must we apprehend it?

(1) In what way does God bestow it? There are clearly different principles on which He might if He pleased bestow His blessing, He might give it as the reward of moral character, or, if He pleased, He might give it as the reward of religious observances. He might wait in bestowing it until He had thoroughly tested our character, or He might give it to us on condition that we overcome the inherent corruption of our nature. But it is not thus that we find Him bestowing this unspeakable blessing. St. Paul's words in Eph. ii. 8, though not mentioning the gift of justification, describe the way in which God bestows it:—"By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Those words teach that the whole salvation is a gift, and this is completely borne out by many other passages. Take, for example, Rom. iii. 24—"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." I do not think that we always fully realise the meaning of the word there rendered "freely;" it seems to be sometimes understood as expressing an abundant liberality, but the real meaning of it is, "as a gift," or "gratuitously." It is the same word as that used in Matt. x. 8—As a "gift ye have received, as a gift give;" and again, in Rev. xxii.

17—"Let him take of the water of life as a gift." And, accepting this as the plain, literal, grammatical meaning of the word, that verse in the Epistle to the Romans is full of most important teaching. It establishes the great truths that our justification is the result of the free grace of God and the consequence of the finished atonement through the most precious blood of propitiation. But it also teaches us that in its application to individuals such as ourselves it is bestowed as a free gift, freely given by God Himself.

This truth let us thoroughly realise. It is not a reward, but a gift; not the fulfilment of a bargain, but a gift; not the satisfying of any previous contract, but a gift on which the sinner has no claim of any kind whatever, and so is included in the life of which our Lord said, "I give unto them eternal life."

(2) Now, having seen the way in which God bestows it, we may pass on at once to see how man is to apprehend it. It must become ours as any other gift does, simply through the gift of the giver. If a loving friend gives us a gift we simply accept it, we do not treat him as if he had made a bargain with us; for the moment we introduce the idea of bargain we expel the idea of gift. If you make a bargain with a man that when you

have done one thing he shall do another, the whole transaction is one of bargain, and gift disappears. This is what St. Paul argues in Rom. iv. 4, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." If we were to fulfil our part of a contract then He would become our debtor and gift would cease; but, if I simply accept in profound thanksgiving the sacred blessing to which I have no claim, and accept it simply and solely because in infinite mercy He gives it, then I recognise His unutterable love in giving such a gift to such an one, and from the deepest depths of a thankful heart acknowledge the principle that it is the gift of God. Now this acceptance of the gift is the act of faith. You remember how St. John describes it, John i. 12, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on His name." According to that passage, to receive Christ is the same thing as to believe on His name, and to those who thus receive Him is given the "power," or the "right" (R.V.), to become the sons of God. Nothing, therefore, can be clearer than the great fact that while on His part there is gift, on ours there must be reception, and that the gift is dependent upon that reception without waiting for its consequences.

Here, then, I come to the second "only" of the Article. "Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." That Article was drawn up with a special reference to the teaching of Rome. The Council of Trent, in Session VI., Can. IX., had decreed, "If any man shall say that the ungodly man is justified by faith only, so that he should understand that nothing else is required which shall co-operate to his attaining the grace of justification . . . let him be anathema." So that the "only" of the Article is in pointed contradiction to the "only" of Rome's decree; and when that "only" is once realised it is indeed full of comfort and the only secret of abiding peace with God. If the gift cannot be given until we have succeeded in praying better, in loving more, in overcoming our difficulties, in rising above temptation, and attaining to more complete heavenly-mindedness, when can it be ours? We may toil, and struggle, and pray, and go to the Holy Communion, and fast, and weep, and spend hours in self-examination—the longed-for improvement will not come; there seems to be a difficulty that cannot be conquered. Other people seem brought to a life of peace, but that aching heart aches on

as much as ever, and so it must do till the Heaven-taught truth is realised, the Saviour's word trusted, and the Saviour's gift accepted as a free gift freely given to those who have failed in all their efforts at self-improvement. How many have I known myself thus hopelessly toiling for some sort of improvement which may be a qualification for the gift of God! And how many have I known to whom the Lord has given rest through the simple question taught me by my honoured friend, Dr. M'Neil, "Must you be forgiven first or made holy first?" Again and again have I had persons say to me, "Of course, I must be made holy first." And again and again have I seen the difficulty melt away before the simple truth that a free forgiveness is presented in the forefront of the mercies of our God, so that although a man has not overcome his temptations, and *before* a man has overcome those temptations, he may in the utter ruin of his ruined heart throw himself in complete helplessness, just as he is, without waiting for personal improvement, and cry as David did, "For Thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great." May I not add that that same poor sinner, thus trusting Christ, and in trust receiving the gift, may have a new life

flash into his soul, so that instead of distress there may be peace, instead of fruitless toil happy communion with God, and instead of a miserable struggle, always striving and always failing, he may be raised to newness of life by the power of the Holy Ghost, and so walk with God to the end of his days a justified believer, accepted in Christ Jesus the Lord?

THE TWO SACRAMENTS.

By the Rev. Canon HOARE, M.A., Vicar of Holy Trinity, Tunbridge Wells.

The subject on which I have been requested to prepare this paper is by no means an easy one, for we have no Scriptural definition of a Sacrament, nor does the word ever occur in Scripture. The word *μυστήριον* in Eph. v. 32, is indeed translated "sacramentum" in the Vulgate, but there is not the slightest authority for that translation, and it is not followed either in the Authorised or the Revised Version. We are dependent, therefore, upon the ecclesiastical use of the term, and, in referring to it, we meet with fresh difficulty, for nothing can be more diversified than the use of the word "Sacrament" in both early and later writers. Hooker says of it that "In the writings of the Christian Fathers all articles which are peculiar to Christian faith, all duties of religion containing that which sense or natural reason cannot of itself discern, are commonly named Sacraments" (Pol. v., sect. 50). By some it is

supposed to mean any sacred thing; by some, to have its origin in the military oath of the Roman soldier; by some, to mean a prayer; and by some a sign. And even when it is applied to the two Holy Sacraments of the Gospel, we have not then done with confusion, for the word is sometimes used for the consecrated elements, sometimes for the visible institution, and sometimes for the perfect whole combining the visible sign and the invisible grace. But in the midst of all this confusion it is remarkable that the two Sacraments of the Gospel, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, stand out pre-eminent. They occupy a position which nothing else occupies, and the very persons who use the word "Sacrament" in the loosest possible manner appear to apply it to them in a way quite peculiar and pre-eminent. There are certain things combined in them which are not combined in anything else. These have been brought together in the definition given in the Church Catechism. There is no definition in Article XXV., but Augustine appears to have defined a Sacrament as a "visible sign of an invisible grace," and in our Catechism this definition is enlarged, as in the well-known words, "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself,

as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." This definition lays down three most important truths: that it is ordained by Christ Himself, that it contains an outward and visible sign, and is accompanied by an inward and spiritual grace. According to this definition the two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are quite distinct from everything else. There is nothing else which satisfies all three conditions. Some may possibly satisfy one and some another, but as for all three combined, they are found in these two, and these two alone.

Let us then carefully consider the three points in the definition.

I. They were both ordained by Christ Himself. The last words He spoke upon earth before His ascension were—"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19); and on the evening before His death He gave the solemn command—"Do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke xxii. 19). Whatever men may think of the institutions, all will admit their Divine authority, and amidst all the controversies which have arisen on the subject there has never been a doubt as to the appointment by

the Lord Himself of these two most holy Sacraments. We receive them therefore as coming direct from Him, and in observing them we are acting as much under His authority as if we had been amongst those who stood by and heard His words on the holy mount or in that upper room where He broke the bread and poured out the wine.

We cannot exaggerate the importance of this truth, for it brings before us these two sacred services with the holy sanction of the Lord's own authority. It shows that to neglect them is to disobey Him. Our allegiance to Him is involved in our reception of them. Thus it speaks very seriously to those who from conscientious motives are timid in coming and receiving them, and teaches them surely that the safest thing that they can do is to obey. What, then, are we to think of the Church of Rome in presuming to forbid the cup to the laity, or of the Salvation Army in dropping out of its whole system both the Sacraments? And how can we sufficiently deplore the idea, which I fear is spreading, that civil registration is an equivalent to the Sacrament of Baptism? But while we are thus anxious to maintain the supreme authority of our Lord's own appointment, it is important for us to mark the

clear distinction between the command of our Lord and the arrangements made either by Churches or by individuals. Church arrangements are necessary in order that congregations may worship together, and the arrangements of individuals may in some cases be very useful; but if we desire to honour the Divine institution we must let it be perfectly clear that we regard all such arrangements as entirely subordinate. There is such a thing as impeding obedience to the command by insisting on compliance with the arrangement; as, for example, by insisting that the Holy Communion must be received in the early morning, when our Lord has made no such regulation, and by His own example has given His indisputable sanction to the reception in the evening. So, again, when those who entertain scruples respecting confirmation are forbidden in consequence of those scruples to partake of the Holy Communion, it is placing the Church's arrangement on a higher footing than the Lord's institution, inasmuch as it forbids a person to obey Him in order that he may comply with the human regulation of the Church. If we wish the two Sacraments to be honoured with the reverence which is due to institutions ordained by Christ Himself, His authority must stand out supreme;

and nothing human, even though it be a Church arrangement, must be allowed for one moment to interfere.

II. The outward and visible sign. It is perfectly clear that the soul can never be saved by any outward and visible sign; it is the spiritual grace which can save, and not the sign. But let no one suppose that the sign is of no importance, or that, if there were no such thing as the spiritual grace, we could afford to part with it.

(1) According to Article XXV., Sacraments are "badges," or "tokens," of Christian men's profession. Now we all know the great importance in life of such badges or tokens. Common life is full of them. The blue ribbon is the badge of total abstinence; the soldier's uniform is the badge of his military service; the flag at the masthead is the badge of the ship's nationality; and the royal sceptre is the badge of the Queen's authority. Hundreds of similar illustrations might be given, and it is only reasonable to believe that there should be some badges or tokens of our allegiance to the King of kings. This then is the clear position of the two Sacraments. Baptism is a badge of our admission into the Lord's kingdom, and the Lord's Supper of our continued dependence on His grace. A Christian without these

Sacraments is like a wife that has thrown off her wedding-ring. He may possibly be faithful in heart, but he is living without the symbol of his allegiance, and he does not declare himself as a believer in the Lord. He refuses to wear the uniform, so he cannot claim to be regarded as a soldier in the army.

(2) But, according to the Article, Sacraments are not only badges, but also "certain sure witnesses." Now consider for one moment their importance as witnesses to the facts of the Gospel. I cannot help believing that the Apostle John refers to them, 1 John v. 8, "There are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, the water, and the blood." In which passage I believe he means by the "spirit," the Word of God inspired by the Holy Ghost, and by the water and the blood the two Sacraments—but whether or not that be the true exposition of that text, consider the incontestable character of the evidence borne by the Sacraments to the great facts recorded in the Gospel. The different Churches of Christendom may be likened to lines all radiating from one common centre and separating into various branches as they proceed; that common centre being the Church at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. From that centre they have radiated north, south,

east, and west, over the whole world. Nor are they merely geographically divergent, but in the course of their progress many differences have arisen, so that there are some points in which they are bitterly opposed to each other, and in which it would be perfectly impossible to get them to act together. But now we are met with this most remarkable fact, that they all have received the two Sacraments. With reference to many points about those two Sacraments there has been sharp contention, but in their reception in some form or other as a Divine institution there is, as a matter of fact, a perfect unanimity. But if those Sacraments were not introduced at the beginning —that is, at the centre of the circle, when and where did they originate? In which of the lines were they first introduced, and when, and by whom? And how were they carried across from one line to another? If we were to endeavour to introduce a new Sacrament now, would the Church of Rome receive it from us? Or, if Rome were to seek to introduce one (as it has done) would all the Asiatic Churches receive it from Rome? It would be utterly impossible for any Church to introduce a new Sacrament now; or, if they were to succeed in introducing it, to obtain its reception amongst all the scattered Churches of

Christendom. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that these two Sacraments must have had their origin at the centre from which all the lines radiated; that is, they must have been introduced at the time and place of which we are told in Scripture. But how could they have been introduced then if the facts commemorated had not really taken place? How could the Sacrament of commemoration have been instituted at that time if there had been no Last Supper, no Cross, and no Resurrection? It is clear, therefore, that that Sacrament could not possibly have been in the position which it now occupies throughout Christendom if the Lord had not been crucified, or if the facts stated in the Gospels had been untrue.

(3) But, according to the Article, they are not only "sure witnesses," but they are "effectual signs of grace and God's good-will towards us." This seems to mean the same as the language of the Catechism, in which it says they are "pledges to assure us thereof," for they are witnesses not only to the facts, but to the great purpose of God in those facts. Thus, the outward sign of Baptism (whether by sprinkling or immersion, for that depends upon human arrangement and is of no importance) is an assurance to us of the washing of regeneration in the new birth, for if there

were no such washing, why was the sign given, and what could be its meaning? Then, again, the partaking of the bread and wine is an "effectual sign" or assurance to us of the "strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ," for if there were no such spiritual food, why was the sign given, and what could be its meaning? What did He mean to teach His people if He did not mean to teach them that by faith they were to feed on Him? Thus the two signs become two visible representations of His Divine purpose in the great facts of the Gospel. As He taught believing Jews by types, so by these signs He teaches us. He gives us pictures as well as statements; and in consideration of the weakness of our faith, assures us by these two permanent pictures of the sacred gifts which He promised in His Word; thus baptism is an "effectual sign" to us of His regenerating power, while the Lord's Supper is an effectual sign to us of His own sacred gift of the bread of life.

There is, therefore, the utmost possible importance in the sign, even when taken alone. It is a pledge to assure us of God's purpose of mercy, a witness to give us incontestable testimony of the truths of the facts of the Gospel, and a badge which we may have the honour and

privilege of wearing openly before an unbelieving and gainsaying world.

III. But now we must pass on to the inward and spiritual grace. Hitherto I have spoken only of the outward sign, and, I hope, succeeded in proving its extreme importance as a badge, a witness, and a pledge. But we must not rest satisfied with the outward sign alone, for we may use of both Sacraments the language of the Homily respecting the Lord's Supper. "But thus much we must be sure to hold, that in the Supper of the Lord there is no vain ceremony, no bare sign, no untrue figure of a thing absent." This is what is meant by the word "effectual" in the Article, when it speaks of them as "effectual signs of grace and God's good-will." But now comes the crucial question, What is meant by this grace, and in what way is it conveyed? As for the grace, it is of the utmost possible importance for every one of us, for it involves nothing less than life itself. In the one case it is the commencement of life: as our Catechism teaches us, "it is a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness;" and, in the other, it is the maintenance of life by that spiritual food described by our Lord as His own Body and Blood, of which food He said, in St. John vi. 54,

"Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." It is of the greatest importance, therefore, for us to keep well in mind the sacred character of that spiritual grace, and to remember that it has been the purpose of God to make these two Sacraments not merely signs and symbols of His inestimable gift, but, according to the Article, "effectual signs," and, according to the Catechism, "means whereby we receive the same," and to partake of the sacred privilege, in the earnest hope that we may ourselves experience both His life-giving and life-maintaining power.

And now for the question which I imagine has agitated the Church almost as much as any other in practical theology, In what way is this grace conveyed?

(1) It is not as, according to the Church of Rome, "*ex opere operato*," that is to say, it is not the necessary result of any human action. If we break a piece of wood the two parts are separated *ex opere operato;* if we put gold into the furnace it is melted *ex opere operato, i.e.*, by the invariable action of the heat; but God has not put into the hands of man such a power, with reference to the Sacrament, that we can say, if the Sacrament is administered the work is done, and the life is

either given or maintained. But it is given according to God's own sovereignty. As our Lord said of the new birth (John iii. 8), "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

(2) It is not through any change in the elements that the gift is given. Two ideas have been put forward upon this subject. There is the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, in which the elements in the Lord's Supper are said to be changed into the body and blood of Christ Himself, that is, into the spiritual grace represented by them; and there is an idea, not so clearly defined, that there is what I may call a certain fusion of the spiritual grace into the elements which are set apart to represent it; and I believe there are many who entirely deny the doctrine of transubstantiation, who yet have an idea that there has been some mysterious change in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, though I never heard the same asserted of the water in baptism. If either of these two opinions were true, it would, of course, follow that whoever partook of the sign must in the same act partake of the grace; and against any such idea the Church makes the most

solemn protest in the twenty-ninth Article, in which it is said :—"The wicked and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as St. Augustine saith) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ; but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing."

(3) The gift of life is the personal gift of God the Holy Ghost, "the Lord and Giver of Life," and He dwells, not in such things as bread, wine, and water, but in the souls of His faithful people of whom the Lord said, "He dwelleth with you and shall be in you." The twenty-fifth Article, therefore, is in perfect harmony with Scripture when it says, "By the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him;" and so Hooker is right when he says, "They contain in themselves no vital force or efficacy; they are not physical, but *moral* instruments of salvation."

(4) Once more, the grace is not secured to the recipient by any grace-transmitting power in the administrator; for there is no such grace-transmitting power alluded to in Scripture. As far as I understand what is called "the Sacramental

system," it is that grace is transmitted to the soul exclusively by Sacraments, that the power of transmitting grace was given by our Lord to His Apostles, by His Apostles to the bishops, by bishops to priests, and that so by the priests the grace is imparted to the people. Thus there is raised a great fabric of sacerdotal power. But if there be any truth in it, it is certainly most extraordinary that there is not an allusion to it in the Word of God. There are a great number of references to baptism, there are four records of the institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, there are three Epistles and various other passages on the subject of the ministry, but in them all there is not a syllable that has the slightest reference to this grace-transmitting power. There is a most careful charge with reference to the transmission of truth, as in the words, "The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also," but as for the transmission of grace, we are left without a hint on the subject; and if the life of the Church is dependent upon it, we have to face the most extraordinary fact that we are left by the Word of God without any instruction on a subject essential to our life.

(5) On the other hand, there are countless

passages in the Word of God in which the soul is taught to come into direct contact with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and to feed on Him by faith; passages in which there is no allusion either to the Sacraments or the ministry, as, for example, in His own words (John vi. 35), "I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." It is in the soul of the recipient that the true qualification must be found. It is to the worthy reception that the promise is given, to the true repentance of former sins, to the steadfast purpose to lead a new life, to the lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, to the thankful remembrance of His death, and to charity with all men. This is the spirit to which God promises grace, and of which our article teaches us that "in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation." I cannot, therefore, conclude with a better passage than that from the Homily, in which it is said, "It is well known that the meat we seek for in this Supper is spiritual food; the nourishment of our soul; a heavenly refection and not an earthly; an invisible meal and not bodily; a ghostly substance, and not carnal; so that to think that without faith we may enjoy the eating and drink-

ing thereof, or that that is the fruition of it, is but to dream a gross carnal feeding, basely objecting and binding ourselves to the elements and creatures. . . . That when thou goest up to the reverend Communion to be satisfied with spiritual meats, thou look up with faith upon the holy body of thy God, thou marvel with reverence, thou touch it with the mind, thou receive it with the hand of thy heart, and thou take it fully with thy inward man. Thus, we see, beloved, that, resorting to this table, we must pluck up all the roots of infidelity, all distrust in God's promises, that we make ourselves living members of Christ's body. For the unbelievers and faithless cannot feed upon that precious body. Whereas the faithful have their life, their abiding in Him, their union and, as it were, their incorporation with Him. Wherefore let us prove and try ourselves unfeignedly, without flattering ourselves, whether we are plants of that true olive, living branches of the true vine, members, indeed, of Christ's mystical body, whether God hath purified our hearts by faith, to the sincere acknowledging of His Gospel, and embracing of His mercies in Christ Jesus, so that at this, His table, we receive not only the outward Sacrament, but the spiritual thing also; not the figure, but the truth; not

the shadow only, but the body; not to death, but to life; not to destruction, but to salvation; which God grant us to do through the merits of our Lord and Saviour; to whom be all honour and glory for ever. Amen."

THE SUFFICIENCY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

By the Rev. Canon GIRDLESTONE, M.A., late Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

There is an ancient sound about these words. They are like weapons used in days gone by, battle-axes, swords, spears, and such-like, which are hung up in ancestral halls as heirlooms or curiosities. But we must not let our old and tried weapons rust. They may be needed at some future time; in fact, we need them now. The controversy concerning the sufficiency of Scripture was going on when our Lord came into the world, and we see signs that it will rage with more or less fury in one country or another until He come again.

In dealing with this subject I do not propose to discuss questions of text or translation, still less would it be wise to attempt a treatment of the doctrine of inspiration or of canonicity, or of the age, authorship, and compilation of the Sacred Books. These subjects demand and will repay careful and accurate study; in fact, they are

among the most pressing questions of the day; but the subject allotted to me is the Sufficiency of the Scriptures, and my business must be in the first place briefly to indicate the leading characteristics of the books as a whole, and then to point out the sense in which they are "sufficient."

a. What then are the most notable features of the sacred volume which we call the Bible?

It is evidently not an encyclopædia, nor is it a universal history, nor a handbook of rules for the right government of nations and individuals. Its special characteristics are three:—

First, it is mainly taken up with the spiritual side of human nature; it deals with physical phenomena in their spiritual aspects; it is a record of the history of earth and man in their relation to Him who has brought them into being for His own purposes; it is a manifestation of His mind in creation, history, law, and promise. Everything is seen and spoken of from God's point of view.

Secondly, whilst the books are essentially religious and theistic in their ideas and language, the manifestations of the Divine mind, and the exhibitions of His nature are wrought out, not in the form of abstract treatises, but in the course

of history. There is a progressive series of words uttered and things done by God Himself, directly or indirectly, through a long course of centuries, starting at the beginning of all things and reaching onwards to the days of our Lord and His Apostles, with indications that the end of these manifestations is not yet attained. History is thus the backbone of Biblical theology; it is the framework or setting of the Truth of God.

Thirdly, there is a golden thread running through the whole course of this marvellous record. The wisdom of God, the power of God, and the love of God are regarded throughout as set on doing some great work for the benefit of all the families of the earth. Whilst other religions express man's need of God, the Bible rather sets forth God's need of man. Whilst others exhibit man as seeking after God, this brings before us, oh, wonder of wonders! God seeking after man. The door of hope is opened to fallen man at the beginning of the sacred history, and is kept open all the way through to the end. The golden thread is redemption for the enslaved sinner; it is salvation for the lost rebel; it is moral and physical glorification for the degraded outcast; it is spiritual assimilation to the Son of God, that He may be the first-born

amongst many brethren, and that so God may have many sons. Redemption is the true criterion of a revelation. It is the thing which man needed, and any manifestation of God which had not this for its main end would fail of bringing blessing to the human race. Certainly in this respect the Scriptures are unique. They give us full measure and running over; and in the record which they contain we see how God is glorified in His Son.

b. Having thus sketched out the most significant features of the Scriptures as a whole, we have to treat of their sufficiency, *i.e.*, their sufficiency to accomplish the purpose for which God has given them to us.

In dealing with this subject it is well to bear in mind the distinct departments of which the Bible consists. We may divide the old Testament into History (Genesis to Esther), Poetry (Job to Song of Solomon), and Prophecy (Isaiah to Malachi). Similarly we may divide the New Testament into History (St. Matthew to the Acts), Letters (Romans to Jude), and Prophecy (the Apocalypse). It is true we cannot draw absolute lines round the books in this way, for the three departments of literature are more or less interspersed and blended together. At any rate, we

regard each of these elements as "sufficient," and as specially adapted to meet the needs of our composite nature. We want to know of the past dealings of God, for that we have History; we wish to enter into a present devotional life of union with Him, for that we have Poetry and Letters; we seek to have the veil of the future "lifted up," for that we have Prophecy; and each of these is "sufficient."

It is to be observed also that each period of the life of God's people had its own portion of Scripture allotted to it. Our first parents must have been told something of the beginning of all things—possibly before the Fall. This they would hand down, together with the sad narrative of the temptation, and the promises and events which quickly followed. Possibly these things were only orally communicated at first, though it may have been otherwise, for the origin of writing is lost in primæval oblivion. By the time of the patriarchs the narratives of God's dealing with the race, and His promises with regard to the future, may have been systematically written down; and thus, to put it shortly, Genesis was Israel's first Bible, and it was "sufficient" for its purpose. When the people entered Canaan, Genesis would be their handbook to the

places which were sacred to them because of the events in the lives of the patriarchs which it recorded. But meantime their Bible had grown; they had the Pentateuch, or the greater part of it. Similarly, in the course of centuries, the Bible grew as history was extended, and at each age the books issued by prophetic men were sufficient to stimulate their readers or hearers to faith, duty, and hope.

c. Alas! that men should have used these precious books so little and multiplied them so sparingly. The religious teachers seem to have kept the key of knowledge too much in their own hand. Few could say with the Psalmist, "Oh, how I love Thy law; it is my delight all the day." Some neglected the Scriptures altogether; others overwhelmed them with traditions, with casuistry, with burdensome details as to what you might and what you might not do. These accretions, many of which are preserved to us in the Talmud, had become in the time of our Lord a burden too heavy to be borne, whilst they had practically superseded the Word of God.

The same has happened since. The last chapter of the Revelation was at length written, and the Church was left to wait for the Lord's second coming. As time went on, there was the same

multiplication of ceremonies, the same substitution of the dictum of human teachers for the authority of the Word of God, the same gradual withdrawal of the Scriptures from the sight of men and the same accumulation of burdensome ritual and restrictions which made the yoke unbearable. If any of our readers will turn to the *second* Preface of our Prayer-book (which is the original one) the state of things before the Reformation of the Liturgy will be sufficiently illustrated.

In the providence of God the sixteenth century brought light to the souls of men; they awakened as out of a long sleep, and once more realised the grandeur of the treasure which they possessed in the Holy Scriptures and in their sufficiency.

d. Five points may be specified in respect to which the Scriptures, as we now possess them, are sufficient when brought home to the heart by the Holy Ghost:—

(*a*) They are sufficient to enlighten the mind about the Being, the spiritual nature, and the moral attributes of God. His existence and His operations are stamped upon the first verse of the Bible. His holiness, His loving-kindness, His retributive and administrative justice, His faithfulness to His promises, His power to carry

out certain set purposes, His willingness to hear prayer and praise, and to help those who trust Him, His providential rule—these and other great truths concerning the Most High are so clear that he who runs may read.

(*b*) The Scriptures are sufficient to give the reader a practical knowledge of Christ. The Old Testament left the people in a state of expectancy. They could not, indeed, put together an exact programme, but they knew that the Messiah was to come; they associated His coming with great spiritual, social, and political changes; and it must have been with deep interest, but with no great surprise, that they first heard the Baptist's announcement that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. The Gospels do not give us a complete history of Christ, but they are sufficient to make every ordinary reader know how the Lord lived, what He taught and wrought, how He died, rose, and ascended. The Acts give a sufficient outline of the early preaching of Christian truth; while the Epistles give considerable insight into the real meaning and force of Christ's atoning death.

(*c*) The Scriptures are sufficient to tell us the way whereby the sinner can be saved. As a matter of fact, many have been saved who have

had no external help but the Scriptures. This may be freely illustrated from the reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Constantly instances are coming to light which testify of the power of the Book, when blessed to the reader by the Spirit, to bring light and peace to the soul. The Gospels, though they have their hard places, are very full and very simple as to the matter of access to God through Christ for salvation, and the Acts and Epistles abound with plain teaching on this important matter.

(*d*) The Scriptures are sufficient to tell us the way in which a Christian ought to live. They are wonderfully practical. The Acts is mainly a missionary book, but the Epistles are almost entirely letters to infant Churches. They are addressed to young converts who had only received limited instruction and who wanted plain teaching. Many of these converts had lived amidst the gross darkness and impurities of heathenism, hearing and seeing things of which it is a shame even to speak. Consequently the Apostles had to be very plain, and each takes his own line. John supplies the test of love whereby any one can tell whether he is really regenerate and born of God; Peter deals with our behaviour in time of persecution; James treats of sins of the tongue; Paul

deals with special sins and special graces, showing that he who has put on Christ must walk and live a Christlike life of love and purity and truth. What a high tone and standard we find throughout all these Epistles! How they condemn many of us at the present day! Certainly they are sufficient in respect to the way of Godliness.

(*e*) The Scriptures are sufficient to tell us about the judgment and that which is beyond. They proclaim with consentient voice that we are all responsible to God, that He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world, and that we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. No man can read the Scriptures attentively without seeing that human existence is not ended when we die, but that there is a future before us all, and that we are now shaping our final destinies for weal or for woe. God has set before us the way of life and the way of death, and no one has depicted the consequence of accepting the one or the other in such vivid language as our Lord Himself. It would seem as if the writers felt that on so grave a subject the Master's voice should be heard with special distinctness.

On these five points which have now been enumerated, viz., the truth about God, the mission

of Christ, the way of salvation, the path of Christian life, and the judgment to come, the Scriptures are a divinely-appointed and a sufficient guide.

e. It has been pointed out that the Scriptures are sufficient to teach the great truths which God has revealed and which man needs. But even this statement needs to be guarded. The Bible is the letter; and we need God's Holy Spirit to arrest our attention, to quicken our conscience, and to enlighten our understanding, in order that we may make Biblical truth our own. Moreover, we need faith in Christ Jesus, in order that we may see the proportions of truth and the bearing of various kinds of truth on our thought and life.

Moreover, we are not so to hold the sufficiency of Scripture as to disregard or despise other things. Dictionaries, concordances, archæological and historical discoveries, maps, plans, versions, commentaries, expositions—these are all useful; not, indeed, for the discovery of the way of life, but to help us to see other things more clearly—to get the drift of an Epistle, the force of an idiom, or the origin of some custom or usage.

f. Tradition is also useful; but what do we mean by tradition, and in what sense is it use-

ful? Many things are covered by this ambiguous word.

First under the head of tradition may be included the *writings of early Christians* who lived in the centuries that followed the Apostolic era. Their writings are now exceedingly accessible through the publication of "The Ante-Nicene Library" and other series of patristic works. They are deeply interesting, for they illustrate the tone and spirit of early Christendom, the conflicts between Christianity and heathendom, the subtle artifices whereby the deceiver sought to ruin the faith, and the determination with which the Church had to stand out against the world. Most of these writings are of a simple stamp, practical and hortative rather than theological or speculative. Words were used somewhat loosely, and abstruse discussions were avoided. But as time went on there arose doctrinal controversies and narrow distinctions and bitter dissensions, and amidst these sprang up the second class of tradition, viz.—

The Creeds and the Decisions of Councils.—Each of these has its history, and usually a somewhat painful history. The essence of a creed is that it declares nothing new, but simply the old original truth; and each new creed is supposed

to bring out somewhat more clearly what had been held from the beginning. The decisions of Councils hardly stood on the same footing as creeds; and no two of the Councils are of equal importance; we must content ourselves here with reminding our readers of the view which our Church laid down on the subject in her twenty-first Article.

The third element in tradition is *the Liturgical.* Probably the idea of a Liturgy was Jewish, and any one who compares our Liturgy with an ordinary Jewish Prayer-book will notice the numerous points of resemblance. The literary origin of our most ancient Liturgies is lost in oblivion, and it is difficult to know how far the earliest samples we possess represent methods of conducting services which can even be called sub-Apostolic. The devotional element in these ancient documents is more trustworthy than the ceremonial, and the rubrics have been considerably developed as time has gone on. Thus, any "tradition" which derives its authority from the ritual contained in an ancient Liturgy must be regarded with hesitation, if not with suspicion.

These three elements in tradition, the literary, the dogmatic, and the liturgical, ought to be studied with attention, and treated with respect,

though they manifestly claim nothing for themselves except so far as their teaching accords with the Scriptures. There is a wonderfully "Protestant" ring about the earliest of the Fathers, and we wish that later writers had more strictly followed in their wake in this respect. We modern Christians would do well to acquaint ourselves more accurately with the real nature of these ancient writings, and to respect the convictions which led many of the believers of those times to suffer hardship, and even to lay down their lives. If we saw their modes of worship, perhaps we should regard many of them as somewhat "High Church," if not "Ritualistic;" but, if we saw them facing wild beasts in an amphitheatre, we should begin to question whether their Christianity were not made of more sterling metal than ours. Whilst, however, we honour their faith and value their testimony to the beliefs of those times, we see nothing in them, in their creeds, or in their liturgies, to shake our conviction as to the sufficiency of Scripture.

g. Frequently the word "tradition" is withdrawn from view, and the word "Church" substituted for it. We are frequently told that the Church gave us the Bible, and that the Church is the divinely-appointed interpreter of the Bible.

One would naturally have thought that God gave us the Bible, that His Spirit inspired the writers, and that the same Spirit is the enlightener of the understanding whereby the truth may be elicited from the sacred text. All that any Church could do would be to conserve and hand down what was committed to it. This the early communities did with wonderful faithfulness and discrimination. We have only to read the remains of a single writer, *e.g.*, Irenæus, to see that the early Christians had the same books as we have; and whilst considerable difference prevails in the Churches concerning the authority of the Apocrypha, there is none concerning the books of the New Testament. Although the origin of the canon both as regards the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures is surrounded with obscurity, we cannot but see that God put His mark on certain books, or on the work of certain writers, and enabled the early Christians to recognise them as sacred and authoritative. It does not, however, follow that the early Christians were authoritative interpreters of Scripture, or that the gift of infallibility has been conferred by God on Pope, council, clergy, or Church. What then is the "authority of the Church" of which we hear so much, and which is sometimes set against the sufficiency of Scripture?

Much depends on the meaning we attach to the word Church; something also to the degree of authority demanded. The word "Church" may mean the whole society which makes up the Body of Christ, some members of which are not yet born; this is the Church according to Nowell, Hooker, Jewell, and Taylor. Of course this Body, as such, is not yet grown up, though it is daily added to. It may have authority in the world to come, but its day for exercising it is in the future. Secondly, the word may mean the aggregate of all Churches or communities which have sprung from the original Church at Jerusalem, and which ought to have common order, common doctrine, and common life. But, alas! they have not these things; and though we may regard them all in the aggregate, they are practically separated, and have no chance of meeting in common council, some being separated in respect to order (*e.g.*, Episcopalians and Presbyterians), some in respect to doctrine (*e.g.*, Roman Catholics and Anglicans), and some in respect to life. There is no Church authority proceeding from this heterogeneous collection of communities as they now exist; nor have their earliest, and comparatively undivided, representatives supplied us with anything which we have not got already secured to us in Scripture,

except in certain matters of order and ritual and detail. Let the student refer to Jeremy Taylor's *Liberty of Prophesying* on this subject. Thirdly, there are "particular Churches" such as our own. The teaching concerning them is clear from our twentieth and thirty-fourth Articles. They have authority in matters which Scripture has left open, and this authority ought to be obeyed and upheld. They are not bound—so far as our Articles lay down—by any ancient precedents or customs, though it would be suicidal for a Church lightly to break away from what is old. There is no doubt that each Church ought to be catholic in groundwork, whilst to some degree independent in form, but, above all things, it should be true to Scripture in teaching, whilst holding up a high standard in life. Such a Church as ours stands to its adherents *in loco parentis*. Our parents are to be obeyed and honoured according to the law written in our nature. Their word is law. As we grow up we still obey them, though we do so far more intelligently and sympathetically. So it should be with our Church. At first we accept many things on its dictum, but as our knowledge of Scripture and of Christ advances we see the reason of this dictum. The Word of God is in the background. We still accept our Church's

guidance, but not so blindly as before. We sometimes venture to differ on minor points, or we keep our minds in solution, but we can no more ignore her verdict than we can shut our ears to the voice of our mother. We have her utterances in creeds, articles, homilies, prayers, ceremonies; and though we cannot make every expression square with our conceptions of Biblical truth, we submit with respect. Who are we that we should do otherwise? Christians are never instructed in Scripture that each of them is free to draw up his own method of worshipping God. If there are to be communities at all, we must submit in minor matters to our elders and betters. Of course some stubborn souls will object to this, but the common sense of Christendom accepts it, and it does not derogate from the sufficiency of Scripture in the slightest degree.

h. Putting aside further questions concerning the relationship of the Church and the Bible, I wish to point out that the really abstruse questions on which we do not seem to get clear light in Scripture are also left open by tradition and Church authority. The Church of past ages has systematised truth, has formulated dogmas, and has developed theology to a great extent, and we are reaping the benefit of all this at the present

day. If the student takes up any theological text-book, such as Litton's *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*, he will see this to be the case. But, after all, none of these dogmatic treatises take us a step beyond the Scriptures, or, if they do, we have a right to hang back and suspect danger. The object of a system is that we should see the relation of truth to truth, and also the comparative proportion of truths, for there are "weightier matters" and lighter matters. Both of these may be learned from the Scripture itself, for the sacred writers indicate the true relations of doctrines and their right proportions also, but they do not exhibit their scheme. They leave us to find it out as best we can. Here, then, is the legitimate work of theologians; and we may fairly and thankfully use their terminology where it has stood needful tests.

If, however, a man says, "I will stick to my Bible, I decline to look at your articles, liturgies, and dogmatic treatises," well, so be it; let him make his own dogmas; but let him remember that he is not omniscient, that it is scarcely modest to ignore the experience of the past, and that, after all, there is hardly a theological word which he himself uses which has not had a history of its own of which he is probably ignorant.

The wisest course seems to be first to study a doctrine in the light of Scripture, and afterwards to confirm or check the results attained by comparison with the views of other persons of various ages. A few instances will illustrate this.

(*a*) In dealing with *the Person of Christ*, a vast study is opened to us. What do we mean by "Person," by "nature," by "deity," by "divinity," by "Sonship"? Let the would-be theologian imbue his mind with the doctrine of the Godhead as unfolded in a series of manifestations, acts, and utterances in the Old Testament; then let him study the manifestations, acts, and utterances of Christ. He has got "sufficient" here to bring him to a sound conclusion; but it will confirm him in that conclusion if he find himself in harmony with the creeds and formularies of the Church through all time.

(*b*) In dealing with the doctrine of *Redemption*, or the way of salvation, let him go to the law and the testimony, tracing the promises and the redeeming work of God from age to age through the Old Testament. Next let him compare the utterances in the Gospel and Epistles concerning the work of Christ. Then it would be well for him to test his conclusions as before. He will find some people holding "particular redemption,"

others holding "universal redemption," but he will see his way to sound conclusions whilst recognising that there are two aspects of the question.

(*c*) Let him take the doctrine of *Election*, and deal with it in the same way. He will soon find that there is election to privilege and selection for service running through the Old Testament, and that the word "elect" is not always used in the same sense in the New Testament. This will enable him to see the various senses in which this word is used in the formularies of the Church of England, and they in turn will confirm and check him in his thoughts and utterances.

(*d*) Once more, let him face the subject of *Holiness* or *Perfection*, which is so much discussed now. Scripture will perhaps lead him in two directions, and he will have narrowly to examine its terminology and its proportions, and to test its statements and its spirit by comparison with the experience of Christians of different ages. He will find nothing in Scripture or in dogmatic or devotional theology to justify him in taking anything but the highest standard of holiness; and he will find plenty in both to remind him that "the old man" will intrude upon "the new man" till the day of his death. He will find the

possibilities of the Christian to be great, and his responsibilities in proportion; but he will see the more need day by day to draw upon the sympathy of the High Priest, and to claim and admire His forbearance and long-suffering.

In a word, it is far best to go to the fountain-head for our theology, and to recognise its sufficiency for personal guidance; but, forasmuch as the learner is frequently called or drawn to be a teacher, or at least to pronounce an opinion on disputed questions, it will be wise in us to bear in mind that while in these respects Scripture is all-sufficient, we must not be self-sufficient, and that the experience of past ages and of Christian communities is not to be despised.

i. In the previous sections of this paper the subject of the Sufficiency of Scripture has been dealt with chiefly in connection with the doctrines we draw from it, and the aids and checks with which God in His goodness has provided us. These doctrines do not hang upon isolated texts, but on the current of theological thought which runs through the Bible. It remains that we should consider how our view of the sufficiency of Scripture bears upon our reading of individual passages. Nothing need be said here about questions of translation or transcription, though these,

of course, have to be taken into account by every student. The subject may be regarded thus: I take the Bible as my supreme authority in matters of faith and duty. On these matters it is my only primary source of information. I do so, primarily, because I have been taught by my parents and my Church to do so; and, secondarily, because I see reason to believe that the books of Scripture are canonical and authoritative, being the work of prophetic men commissioned by God to write, or, in a word, inspired. At the same time, I do not read the Bible quite as I used to do many years ago. I exercise my reason, my imagination, my historic sense, much more than formerly, partly because the past half-century has been prolific in the discovery of contemporary materials and illustrations which have tended to remind me of the close relationship between Biblical and non-Biblical histories and countries. What is called "the comparative method" has infected my mind, for good or for evil. Moreover, I feel inclined to accentuate the human element in the Scriptures much more than formerly, and to remember that the sacred writers were men of like passions and like minds with ourselves. I also seek to test and verify the truth of the Divine oracles by the experience of various ages of the

Church, to distinguish the earlier and later departments of revelation, to notice the repeated and unrepeated utterances of God, and to detect the permanent elements of faith and duty as compared with the transient.

Having frankly made this confession, whither will it lead me? Have I lost or gained thereby? Different people will answer this question in different ways. Perhaps the best plan will be to put a few cases. There are four classes of statements in Scripture which may be considered in this connection. They have to do with things supernatural, things historical, things ethical, and things theological.

j. With regard to the narratives in Scripture which may be called supernatural, I accept them as they are written because I accept the book or books in which they stand. They are not isolated events, but parts in a scheme, links in a chain, accessories to the central fact in Biblical history, the intervention of God through Christ. This intervention was natural to God, but supernatural to man; and if the greater is accepted there is no difficulty in accepting the less. The so-called miracles in the Bible are simply superhuman deeds wrought by men who claimed a Divine commission. If anybody thinks that God has restricted

Himself to do only and always what we now see Him doing day by day, let him say so, but do not let him call himself "scientific" because he says so. The whole thing is a matter of evidence, and when once the champion fact—our Lord's Resurrection—is accepted, no one is likely to doubt the rest. The same is the case with the various statements in Scripture concerning the preparation of earth to be the abode of man, and concerning the personal agency of God in connection with the ordinary operations of nature, with the general course of history, and with the conversion of the individual man.

k. Passing to the next class of statements, the historical, they may be subdivided into three kinds, those which are confirmed by external sources, those which apparently run counter to external history, and those which are neutral. Nothing need be said about the first kind, except that we are deeply thankful to God for the numerous confirmations which we possess. About the third kind it may be sufficient to say that when books are accepted as trustworthy we accept their statements as true unless they are proved untrue. Thousands of events in all historic records are "unconfirmed," but they are received if they occur in the pages of a trustworthy author.

But with regard to the other kind a difficulty may be said to exist. Supposing, for example, that the Scripture tells me how Pul, King of Assyria, came up against Israel (2 Kings xv. 19), whilst the Assyrian list of kings makes no mention of Pul, and leaves no room for him, what conclusion shall I come to? My confidence in the sacred historian is such that I am certain he is right. Still the passage is open to discussion. Commentators say that Pul was another name for Tiglath-pileser; well, it might be so, but it is strange that the same man should be called first by his short name and then by his long name in the same chapter. Besides, what shall we do when we get to 1 Chron. v. 26, where we read of Pul *and* Tiglath-pileser? Manifestly we must not resort to this expedient. It is better to say, "I trust the sacred historian, though appearances are against him." His record is quite as trustworthy as the Assyrian canon, and there is no serious improbability in the view that Pul was the son of the previous king, Assur-Nirari, and was associated with his father on the throne, and was subsequently overthrown by Tiglath-pileser, who originated a new dynasty. In this, and all similar cases, let us bear in mind the intrinsic value and the high authority of our documents, which cannot

be lightly set aside even though they should seem inconsistent with the "boastful bulletins" and bald though trustworthy lists of the Assyrian kings.

l. The next class of passage is deeply interesting because of its bearing on practical life. The Mosaic legislation is professedly of God, and is recorded with much minuteness of detail. It sanctions some things from which we shrink, because they are opposed to our moral sense, educated up as it has been by the teaching and example of our Lord. Fortunately here we have the help of the Master. A case concerning marriage and divorce was put before Him, and whilst on the one hand He explained that Moses had been compelled to legislate as he had done because of the hardness of the people's hearts, on the other hand He referred back to the law as it was established "in the beginning," reminding his hearers thereby that the world had been going on a long time before Moses, and that the primæval law recorded in Genesis was unexceptionable. That law was not abrogated through the intervention of the Mosaic institutions, which were only special regulations for a small nation and for a limited time. Thus we seem to have first what may be called the natural law; secondly, a

national legislation adapted to the needs of a particular time and country by Moses, who is represented as acting throughout on suggestions from above; and thirdly, Christ's re-statement of the natural law as overriding the specific legislation, and as containing the elements of greater permanence and greater purity. This being the case, the reader has to use a wise discretion in dealing with things sanctioned, suggested, or ordered by God in Old Testament times, and it is his business to inquire how far they are in accordance with the mind of Christ.

Alongside of this class of passages may be laid the long list of cases in which good men say and do dubious things. All Scripture is written for our learning, but some things are intended to be cautions and warnings rather than examples, and we are not to imitate everything that Abraham, Joseph, or David did, as if they were on the same moral level with our Master. At the same time, it does not do to read the Bible in a censorious spirit. It is best to ask ourselves, when reading of dubious conduct, "Why was this written? What does it teach me to do or to avoid? How does it fit in with what our Lord Himself lays down? My business as a Christian is to do all that He commanded, and other things must stand

and fall by this test. Scripture is sufficient, but faith in Christ Jesus is necessary in order that we may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

m. We come next to the theological statements in Scripture. They are of two kinds—dogmatic and practical. Of the first kind are such as these: "I and the Father are one;" "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world;" "The Comforter whom the Father will send in My name, He shall testify of Me." With regard to all such statements, Scripture may be accepted as putting things in the form most adapted for the mind of men of ordinary stamp. A philosophical seeker after truth may often try to get behind them, and at times he may think he has succeeded, but for ordinary purposes, and especially for teaching simple people, the Scriptural expressions give the true idea of heavenly things. It is well, however, to remind ourselves that God speaks to us in Scripture as a Father to His children, and that He neither tells us the whole of anything nor the reasons of everything. To some He opens the door of heavenly things more widely than to others; and if He has made us see wondrous things and hidden things out of His Law, it is that we may walk with deeper reverence and truer humility.

As an instance of practical statements we might take such an one as the simple and old-fashioned words, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." We accept this as true because it is in "the Book." It sets us thinking what is the fear of the Lord? what is wisdom? and in what sense is the one the beginning of the other? In order to answer such questions—and God manifestly intends us to ask and answer them—we have to look to other passages. In this particular case we have the same utterance, substantially, in Job, Psalms, and the Proverbs, whilst there are many cognate passages which make us sure that we have come across a deeply-written law of nature. It is announced authoritatively, and it is confirmed experimentally. There are many of these laws of nature in the Bible. Man was never intended to live without God, and the exhibition of his varied relationship to God in Scripture constitutes the true law of his being. No doubt we have to apply a sort of inductive principle to Scripture in order to draw out these laws, but when we have done so we are richly rewarded.

Perhaps some one will come to the conclusion that it is not so easy to read the Bible profitably and intelligently as he once thought. Such a

conclusion is highly to be commended. Scripture is sufficient, but we have to dig for God's truth as for hidden treasures. People read their "passage" or their "chapter" and put the Book down and straightway forget what they have read. This is not at all the right idea of the sufficiency of Scripture. The Bible is not like a Mahommedan talisman; it has to be read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested. We have to remember that the language is human, though the things spoken of are Divine; that the mode of expression is phenomenal, *i.e.*, describing things as they appear (*e.g.*, the sun rising or standing still); that it is highly figurative (*e.g.*, "Judah is a lion's whelp"); and that it is Oriental, making large general statements from which something occasionally has to be deducted (see for example Rom. x. 18). We have to avoid drawing fancy lessons from things which we imagine typical, as, *e.g.*, when crossing the Jordan is interpreted as if it meant getting beyond the river of judgment, an idea based on a false derivation of the word "Jordan." We have to look for checks, conditions, and qualifications which may keep us from a too free use of God's words; thus, in Hosea xiv. 4, we read, "I will heal their backslidings," and the same words are quoted in Jer. iii. 22, but in each case the

context shows that the backslider must *return* if he wants to be healed.

This subject need not be pursued. To sum up, we should say that if we can say of any doctrine or statement "it is in the Bible," that is enough to draw our attention and our submission, but we must make sure that it really is in the Bible in the way in which we state it and in the sense in which we quote it. If it is not so, we must modify our assertions and our teaching accordingly; it is our business not to get truth on our side, but to be on the side of truth, and God's Word is truth.

Amongst the things most sorely needed in this age of cheap Bibles and commentaries is that we should read with a prayerful, humble, receptive heart, and with an earnest desire to grow in likeness to Christ, and to walk in His footsteps the path of thorough and active Godliness.

DIVINE JUDGMENT.

By the Rev. Sir EMILIUS LAURIE, Bart., B.D. (of Maxwelton), late Vicar of St. John's, Paddington.

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"—Gen. xviii. 25.

The above words stand in the form of a question, but they do not imply a doubt. The Lord had revealed to Abraham His purpose of destroying Sodom, which appeared to involve the penal destruction of the righteous: hence the appeal of the patriarch, "Wilt Thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" Abraham was perplexed; he saw the difficulty, he did not see the solution of it: but, however incomprehensible the judgment, he did not for one moment question the justice of the Divine procedure: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The reverent humility of Abraham may well serve as a model, whenever we approach the consideration of the judicial action of God. The truth which perplexed Abraham has perplexed the deepest thinkers in all ages of the world; it is so wrapped

up with the origin of evil, the permission of sin, and other cognate mysteries, as to be, for the present at least, incapable of complete solution; and we can often only take refuge in the profound exclamation of the Apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

But partial knowledge does not justify the neglect or the perversion of important truth. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever." I proceed, therefore, to inquire what are the teachings which have reached us upon the subject of Divine judgment? What are we to understand by such judgment, and in what relation do we personally stand to it?

The word κρίνω (to judge), commonly used in the New Testament, means originally to separate, and in the moral sense to separate good from evil; but as the usual effect of such separation is to exclude the evil, the word has very frequently attached to it the idea of condemnation. More precisely, judgment is represented under two aspects, either as a process (κρίσις), or as a result (κρίμα); either as the act of separating, of *judging*,

or as the sentence of *judgment* following thereupon. Thus in one sense judgment is a present and immediate act, a process now going on upon earth; and, under certain conditions, men are "judged already:" in another sense, judgment is future, the working out of a law now in operation, the necessary and final completion of issues begun here. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment" (Heb. ix. 27, R.V.).

The tendency of modern thought, advanced thought, as it proudly calls itself, is to minimise the essential principles of judgment, if not to deny it altogether. Men make very free with the Divine goodness, as though it were the only attribute belonging to the moral Governor of the universe, and do not hesitate to reject whatever militates, or, according to their notions, *appears* to militate against such goodness. The judicial action of God is thus practically voted out of court as unworthy of a place in the administration of a benevolent Being. With the Christian, of course, the testimony of Scripture upon this as upon other questions is conclusive; but there are witnesses, outside the sphere of revelation proper, whose voices demand a hearing, and whose testimony should carry weight with those who reject the authority of the Word of God.

Argument from Conscience.

We have not far to travel for our first witness. There resides within each of us, bound up in the original constitution of our nature, a principle of reflection whereby we distinguish between and either approve or disapprove of our own actions. Thus each man becomes a judge unto himself; he passes sentence upon actions morally bad and deserving of blame; he is so far at one with the Supreme Judge, and anticipates the issues of Divine judgment. We must of course admit that this moral sense, this conscience, or whatever we call it, is sometimes mistaken in its judgments; it inherits with other departments of our nature the vitiating influences of the Fall; but, although fallible as a guide, it is valuable as a witness to those broad distinctions between right and wrong upon which the conscience of the world has never failed to pronounce judgment. Now, can we dissociate the universality of conscience from the existence of a Supreme Being and the judicial processes of His government? Whence do men pronounce an action to be wrong, except as contravening the righteous will of One who has made it so? Whence do they pass sentence upon an action as deserving of punishment, except as

anticipating the higher judgment of Him who has the right and the power to inflict such punishment? Why does conscience make cowards of us all, unless it be that it condemns us for wrong-doing, and anticipates the penal consequences of the Judgment Day? Most assuredly, then, the argument from conscience cannot be lightly brushed aside by any who would deal honestly with the question of Divine judgment.

Argument from History.

Once assume that this is God's world—and if we attach its full evidential value to the testimony of conscience we must certainly admit that much—we should expect to find traces of judicial action upon the broad platform of national history. Nations in their corporate capacity have no existence in a future state: in this they differ from the individual: for him there is a future of recompense: but the nation lives only in the present, and in the present, therefore, it must receive its reward. What then is the verdict of history, what the great lesson taught by the rise and fall of nations? Is it not, in the language of Scripture, that "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people"? The history of the Jewish nation is a ceaseless comment upon this

truth; modern history is no less vocal. Wherever God is honoured and obeyed, the nation prospers; wherever God is ignored, and His laws trampled under foot, national life withers and decays. He must be blind, wilfully blind, who cannot trace the judicial action of God in human history; all down the ages have "the nations raged and the peoples imagined a vain thing," but always with the same result—"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." The argument from history needs only to be stated, and we find that, as with the argument from conscience, it bears no halting testimony to the reality of Divine Judgment.

Argument from Analogy.

We now enter a region which has been immortalised by Bishop Butler. Let me ask, in passing, whether Butler is as much read now, as deeply pondered, as he deserves to be? His great work on *The Analogy*, "carefully and closely packed up out of twenty years' hard thinking," has won for itself the character of being "the most original and profound work extant in any language on the philosophy of religion" (Mackintosh). I have before me a list of twenty-one treatises upon it, published between the years

1737 and 1849; and the supply has not yet ceased. The four great chapters (ii.–v.) upon the moral government of God answer many difficulties in connection with the subject before us, and go far to prove the reality and illustrate the nature of Divine judgment. We must be careful, however, to note the limit which Bishop Butler attaches to his argument. The function which he assigns to it is not that of supplying positive evidence on behalf of Christianity, but of meeting and repelling objections which may be brought against it. Its place amongst Christian apologetics is, in his opinion, mainly a defensive one. He meets the sceptic, who says that God never would do this or that thing ascribed to Him in Scripture, by showing that these very things He actually has done; that what is objected to in the Bible is found again and again in nature and experience; and that thus, whilst analogy may furnish no substantive proof that Christianity is true, it supplies the strongest possible reasons against holding it to be false. A whole host of objections against it are overthrown, and a way paved for those positive proofs upon which the Christian argument securely rests.

Butler's treatise is not addressed to Atheists. It presupposes the existence of a God, but claims

for Him at the outset only intelligence and power, viewing Him first as the natural, and then as the moral governor of His creatures.

The following is but a bare outline of so much of the Analogy as specially bears upon the subject under consideration. Man finds himself living in this world under an economy of pleasure and pain, which are, and which he knows to be, largely dependent upon his own actions: by pursuing a certain line of conduct he has a reasonable expectation of happiness; whilst an opposite course of behaviour commonly issues in misery and ruin. But this is to all intents and purposes a government, and it is at the very least credible that, as punishment follows upon certain actions here, punishment in some form or another may exist hereafter. If there is nothing inconsistent with Divine goodness that man should be punished in this life, it may surely be equally consistent with such goodness that he should be punished in the life to come; for Divine goodness, as Butler finally observes, "may not be a bare single disposition to produce happiness; but a disposition to make the good, the faithful, the honest man happy." Some striking analogies are then brought forward between the actual punishments of this life and the alleged punishments of the next. For example,

punishment often overtakes an action committed for some present gratification, as when intemperance is followed by disease and untimely death; and such pains and penalties are often far greater than the immediate enjoyment secured, as when the disgrace of a lifetime follows the momentary indulgence of some ungovernable passion. Again, delay, sometimes long delay, intervenes between the commission of an act and its penalty, proving that delay of punishment carries with it no sort of presumption of final impunity. Once more, these natural punishments often come with astounding and unlooked-for suddenness; and, when they do come, they not unfrequently bear upon them the impress of finality; there may have been long delay, and all dread of a day of reckoning may have passed away, but at length the avenger's voice is heard, the case has become desperate, and "poverty and sickness, remorse and anguish, infamy and death, the effect of men's own doings, overwhelm them, beyond possibility of remedy or escape."

A due consideration, therefore, of the course of things in the midst of which we find ourselves placed, fully shows that there is nothing incredible in the beliefs of Christianity so far as they assume the existence of rewards and punishments in a future state.

Having thus shown that man is existing under a system of government, a system the laws of which are known, and the sanctions of which are executed, Butler goes on to point out that, inasmuch as those actions which are righteous are followed by pleasure, and those which are wicked by pain, it follows that the government under which we live is a moral government, and that He who administers it is the righteous Governor of the world. In the prosecution of this high argument, Butler passes under review the existing phenomena which bear upon the question:—As man's inborn sense of justice: the certain consequences of prudence and imprudence: the chastisements which fall upon vice: the natural pleasures of virtue and pains of vice, apart from their effects either of good or evil to the commonwealth: the regard so far borne to virtue by mankind, and the detestation so far of its opposite, that the former is on the whole followed by the esteem of society, the latter by its disapproval and contempt. These plain and obvious facts all serve to indicate a moral government, being so many specimens of the manner in which God now deals with the righteous and the wicked respectively, by attaching present advantage to the right-doing of the

one, present loss and pain to the wrong-doing of the other.

It is true that there are certain opposite phenomena which seem to make against this argument, as, for example, that there is a pleasure in the indulgence of certain vicious actions; and that instances frequently occur in which vicious actions are rewarded and virtuous actions punished in this world. Bishop Butler disposes of these objections by pointing out that the pleasure derived from the indulgence of a passion is owing to the passion itself, not to what is vicious in it; the pleasure springs from what is lawful and good, not from what is unlawful and evil; and that, if vicious actions are ever rewarded and virtuous ones punished, the former are never rewarded *because* they are vicious, but *though* they are vicious, the latter are never punished *because* they are virtuous, but *though* they are virtuous; and that, if things take their natural and due course, virtue *as such* is rewarded, and vice *as such* punished. This leads the Bishop to a series of acute and powerful reasonings upon the necessary tendencies of virtue on the one side and of vice on the other, and on what the full and final result would be if universal virtue or universal vice were to prevail in the world.

In this part of his argument Butler does something more than repel disproofs against the doctrine of the moral government of God. The considerations which he brings forward carry with them strong confirmatory evidence on behalf of that truth; and, arguing only from what we see around us, he finds strong reason for anticipating that virtue will be rewarded and vice punished in another world.

I am not sure that the argument on behalf of Divine judgment drawn from analogy can be carried further than this. It certainly supplies an answer to many of the objections which are commonly brought against it; it proves that there is nothing incredible in supposing that the principles of moral government which obtain here may be found in operation hereafter: it even proves, I think, that a very high degree of probability attaches to the belief that it will be so. And "to us," as Butler remarks, "probability is the very guide of life."

We do not, therefore, claim for any of the considerations which have been thus far brought forward on behalf of a judgment to come, the arguments, viz., from conscience, from history, and from analogy, the force of mathematical proof; but we do claim for them that they supply

effectual answers to a whole army of objectors, and that, taken together, they furnish evidence, which is only a degree short of positive demonstration, that the Christian doctrine of Divine judgment is founded upon truth.

Argument from Scripture.

The full and final belief in the doctrine of Divine Judgment rests ultimately upon the authority of the Word of God. Outside the sphere of revelation we find, as we have seen, ample grounds for concluding that such judgment *may* be imminent; we even discover very convincing reasons for believing that it *will* take place; but it is within the limits of Scripture itself that we find ourselves upon sure and solid ground, and learn not only the possibility, not only the probability, but the certainty of that judgment which awaits us all. "It is appointed unto men once to die;" of that there can be no doubt whatever: experience and Scripture are at one here; but equally certain, as alike confirmed by both Scripture and experience, is the announcement which immediately follows, "and after this cometh judgment."

The space at my disposal forbids any exhaustive examination of the testimony of Scripture. The Old Testament is deeply impregnated with the

judicial action of the Almighty; from the early records of the Fall and its immediate consequences, to the period at which its last echoes are heard amidst the decaying fortunes of the chosen race, the voice of revelation speaks in no doubtful accents upon the reality of Divine judgment: and if the sceptical student of Old Testament Scripture ventures to ask, with the cavilling Jews of old, "Where is the God of judgment?" the answer is, *Everywhere.*

I confine myself, therefore, to some of the notices contained in the New Testament:—

"So shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xiii. 49, 50).

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels, and then shall He reward every man according to His works" (Matt. xvi. 27).

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all the nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats . . . and these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. xxv. 31, 32, 46, R.V.).

"The Father . . . hath given all judgment unto the Son . . . the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John v. 22, 28, 29, R.V.).

"He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom He hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 31).

"The day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God: who will render to every man according to his deeds . . . In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. ii. 5, 6, 16).

"So, then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 12).

"For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10, R.V.).

"And they were judged every man according to their works" (Rev. xx. 13).

It would be easy to multiply passages, but the above may suffice to show how distinct and emphatic is the testimony of the New Testament to the reality of Divine judgment, and to the fearful consequences which ensue should that judgment pass against us.

Present Judgment.

We must not, however, refer the whole question of judgment to an indefinite and distant future. We have already seen that there are indications of the judicial action of God in this world which are neither few nor unimportant. In a most true sense judgment begins here, and is, indeed, in constant operation. Thus as regards those who

reject the Gospel it is written, "He that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." And, again, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (Jno. iii. 18, 36, R.V.). Whereas it is written of the believer, "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life. . . . He that believeth on Him is not judged" (Jno. iii. 14, 15, 18, R.V.). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (Jno. v. 24, R.V.).

The coming of Christ involved, and involves continually, a separation, a judgment, a sentence, which takes effect at once. "The wrath of God" in His judicial character, which is but the eternal repulsion of evil by good, as pure, as just, as Divine as His mercy, this Divine "wrath abideth on him" that believeth not. It is not said that it "shall come to him," but that it "abideth." It is his portion already. He is under a ban until he believes. He refuses to believe, therefore the ban remaineth. On the other hand, "he that believeth on Him," he that is united with Christ

by faith, is no longer considered as apart from God, he has eternal life as a present possession; and judgment in the sense of condemnation is in his case impossible; he "has passed out of death into life;" "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). "Spiritual judgment is a consequence involved in the rejection of the revelation which Christ made. His will was to unite men to Himself, so that they might have life and not be judged. So far, then, as they rejected Him and stood away from Him, His presence showed them as they truly were. He judged them; and His judgment was equivalent to condemnation. . . . In one sense, therefore, judgment, like the gift of life, is immediate. It lies in the existence of an actual relation (Jno. iii. 18) which carries with it its final consequences. In another sense it is still future, so far as it will be realised in a spiritual order of being 'in the last day.' There is 'a resurrection of life' and 'a resurrection of judgment' (Jno. v. 29), in which the issues of both begun here will be completely fulfilled. Meanwhile the process is going on upon earth. . . . The Passion has left men no excuse. In *that* they can see the mind of God, and according as they surrender themselves to it or resist it,

they find life or judgment" (Canon Westcott's *Introduction to St. John's Gospel*, p. xlix.). These are weighty words. Based as they are upon the definite teaching of the Saviour, they emphasise the fact, too often forgotten, that the two worlds are in close and inseparable connection; that future judgment is no arbitrary independent act, but the working out to their necessary completion of laws under which we are now living; that as eternal life is a present gift, so Divine judgment now *is*, and is the abiding portion of all who will not avail themselves of God's salvation. Perhaps sufficient prominence is not given in our teaching to this truth. We preach a present salvation; do we preach with equal force and clearness a present judgment? and if we sometimes speak in hesitating tones of a judgment to come, may it not be because we have not fully grasped the fact that judgment has already begun, and that the awful issues of the future lie wrapped up in the sin and unbelief of the present?

Future Judgment.

Our argument thus far has been almost wholly occupied with considerations which belong to this present life, and the verification of which lies more or less within reach of our own ex-

perience. The arguments from conscience, from history, from analogy, are bounded by the horizon of time; as also are some at least of the effects of present judgment and present acquittal. In arguing thus, so far from propounding what is unlikely or incredible, we state only that which each one of us may find either in the world around him, or in the recesses of his own heart and conscience. Such argument is valuable in itself; it is valuable also as pointing to a future in which the partial judgments of this life shall find their completion, and as thus containing within it a prophecy of judgment to come. When we find, therefore, in Scripture a reiterated and detailed announcement of such judgment, we discern in it not only nothing which is improbable, but rather that which universal experience would lead us to anticipate. Once admit the moral government of God as now in active operation, and everything connected with it points to its more perfect manifestation hereafter; and just as the many roads, which from all points of the compass converge upon a given point, lead us to look for the existence there of a great city, even though we have never trodden its streets, or cast eye upon its walls; so the many converging lines of God's moral government all point to a final

issue, which will fully vindicate the equity of His administration, and justify His ways to man.

The statements of Scripture upon future judgment point distinctly to (i.) its *universality*, "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God;" (ii.) its *exhaustiveness*, "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known;" (iii.) its *righteousness*, "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness;" "We are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things;" (iv.) its *finality*, "So that they are without excuse:" "and they shall not escape:" "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . And these shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into eternal life."

Judgment of the Wicked.

The fact of the judgment of the wicked is now very generally accepted, at least in theory. The question around which modern controversy rages

is that of the *finality* of such judgment. It were impossible to discuss so deep a subject at length at the close of this paper. I would only observe that the moral difficulty of accepting that truth, the difficulty arising from its assumed antagonism to the Divine attributes of love and mercy, lies equally against the allowance of sin, and with it of suffering, in the universe of a benevolent and almighty Being. All such questions really resolve themselves into that of the deep and, to us, insoluble mystery of the origin of evil. And if the existence of evil is held to be no disproof of the goodness of God, what right have we to affirm that that goodness is violated by any punishment of evil-doing which He may see fit to inflict? The fact is, that our knowledge of the Divine administration is limited to a very insignificant section of it; the sphere of present observation is a very small one; we are the creatures of a day, the occupants of a tiny leaflet in the vast forest of creation; the attitude, therefore, which becomes us in speaking of the judgments of God is not that of presumptuous criticism but of reverent humility. And if the argument on behalf of the finality of future judgment, based upon the finality of many of the present consequences of sin, is sometimes met by an assertion of the tremendous

difference which exists between the two hardships in point of degree, the one relating only to time, the other to eternity, we may answer that if there be injustice in the larger punishment, there must needs be injustice in the smaller one also; or even better, that if there be a *semblance* of injustice in the Divine administration anywhere, it is *but a semblance*, and that, did we know all, it would be made abundantly plain to us that there is real injustice nowhere. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Judgment of the Righteous.

"We must all," says St. Paul, "be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ." And again, "He that judgeth me is the Lord. Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God."

What does this appearance of the righteous before the judgment-seat involve? Not, according to Scripture, the question of acquittal or condemnation; *that* grave question has been determined when the penitent believer has entered into living union with God through Christ;

justified by faith, he is no longer under condemnation; he is a son of God, a fellow-citizen with the saints, a member of the mystical body of Christ, an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ. For such therefore there can be no judgment in the sense of condemnation. "He that believeth on Him is not judged;" "he cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life."

Two ends at least would seem to be answered by such appearance:—

(i.) *The manifestation of Sonship* (Rom. viii. 19); the public declaration of acquittal, the revelation of the eternal distinction "between him that serveth God, and him that serveth Him not." Here the life of a believer is a hidden life, known indeed to God, but unknown to and unrecognised by man. It is but fitting that the public vindication of the choice that he has made, and of the life that he has lived on earth, should one day take place; and that vindication will be made manifest when the Son of Man shall "sit on the throne of His glory . . . and shall set the sheep on His right hand." The gracious words of blessed welcome shall then proclaim in no doubting accents their full title to the eternal inheritance. "Come, ye blessed children of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you

from the foundation of the world." No doubt shall then rest upon the mystery of their adoption; no cavil shall hold good against "the manifestation of the sons of God."

(ii.) *The apportionment of the reward.* Salvation is of grace, but the reward is proportionate to the fruit borne. "Then shall He reward every man according to his works." "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

A difficult question suggests itself here in connection with the sins of believers. We have seen that by virtue of a believer's union with Christ, and through the merit of His atonement, he is already delivered from condemnation; he "cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." For him, therefore, there is abiding forgiveness; his habitual attitude is that of penitence and faith, and the prayer which he daily offers, "Forgive us our sins," finds a continuous answer at the Throne of Grace. For him, therefore, there is no cause for alarm as he looks forward to the Throne of Judgment. Still the question remains, in what relation do the sins of the regenerate life stand to the believer's future

reward? I think that there is strong ground for believing that no sin is ever committed, by sinner or by saint, which does not leave its mark behind it; there is an inseparable connection between sowing and reaping, and redemption has not reversed that law. Judicially the penitent believer is absolved from the penal consequences of his sin, but personally the effect abides. He is not, perhaps he never can be as though he had not sinned: the wound may be healed, but the scar remains; the penalty may be remitted, but the loss to character cannot be replaced.

Chastisement due to sin certainly falls upon the believer in this life; witness the retribution which overtook Jacob, witness the terrible sufferings of David after his great fall, witness the effects of the excesses which prevailed at Corinth: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Sin may not be the only explanation of Christian suffering, but it is one explanation. Let the Christian commit sin, and most assuredly will chastisement overtake him; "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. xi. 30, 32). The sins of believers, therefore, mar their happiness here; do they take aught from their reward hereafter? Surely if any

sowing to the flesh takes the place of what might otherwise have been a sowing to the Spirit, just so far at least there must be some failure in the harvest reaped; apart from deterioration of character there must be some loss of result, some work left undone that might have been done, and consequently some diminution of the reward according to works. That the adjustment of such reward will be "according to truth" we assuredly believe; but that to some of God's faithful servants will be given "authority oven ten cities," to some "over five," we are most plainly taught; and it is only reasonable to expect that the more or less abundant fruitfulness of the Christian in this life shall very largely influence the apportionment of his reward in that which is to come.

The above reflections upon the difficult and mysterious subject of Divine judgment are offered with diffidence, but with a conviction of their substantial agreement with the teaching of Scripture, and the testimony, so far as it is applicable, of our own experience. Enough at all events has been said to show how senseless, to say the least of it, is the conduct of those who, shutting their eyes to plain and patent facts, "put far away the evil day," and make no effort "to flee from the wrath to come;" and on the other hand, how

secure, how supremely blessed, is the position of those who, finding refuge beneath the cross, pass under the all-sufficient covering of a Saviour's blood triumphantly to glory. "And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

"THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS."

By W. PAKENHAM WALSH, D.D., Bishop of Ossory.

"Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."—EPH. iii. 15.

"THE Communion of Saints" is an article of faith, and is embodied in the Apostles' Creed. It will be observed that the expression does not occur in the Nicene Creed, but it is included and implied there in the words "one Catholic and Apostolic Church." In the earlier creeds of the Eastern Church it was thought sufficient to set forth the nature and character of the Church of Christ as a great corporate body, but it was afterwards felt, and especially in the Western Church, that something was needed to express more definitely the bond of union which unites all the children of God, and thus to call attention to the duties and privileges which that union implies; and so the clause was added—"the Communion of Saints." Doubtless the need of this addition was felt because the blessings expressed by it had come to be more fully recognised, and so in our symbol of

faith we say, "I believe in . . . the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints."

It is to be lamented that the superstitious ideas which have been unwarrantably attached to the expression by some, and the fanciful sentiments which have been associated with it by others, have kept many Christian people from giving the subject a due place in their consideration, and they are thus deprived of the instruction and comfort which may be derived from this most Scriptural and Apostolic truth.

Let us endeavour to ascertain its meaning, and see the practical influence which it is calculated to exercise upon the Christian life.

There are many illustrations used in Holy Scripture to set forth the relationship in which the people of God stand to each other and to Him, but the most expressive of these is taken from domestic life. It is the one presented in our text, and under its familiar imagery the Church of God is described as one great family, the members of which are bound to each other by the possession of one common life, the distinction of one common name, and the union with the same parental head. It is a family, the members of which, though sundered by time and space, and divided into two great sections, the one in heaven and the other

here on earth, are all bound together in one blessed bond, are linked to each other by special sympathies, and are looking forward to dwell together in one happy and eternal home.

The "common union of saints," for that is the fundamental idea which underlies the shorter expression, "Communion of Saints," carries us back to their relationship with God, for it is only through that relationship that they can have communion with each other. To be united to each other they must first be united to Him. Just as in a family it is the possession of a common life, derived from the same parental source, which constitutes the bond of union, so in the family of God it is the spiritual life, derived from Him, which forms the basis of Communion. St. John puts this beyond question when he says, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 St. John i. 3). In another place he testifies that this fellowship of Christians with God as their common Father is through faith in His dear Son; for "as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name" (St. John i. 12). Elsewhere we are clearly

taught that the impartation of this Divine life is wrought through the Holy Spirit, "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," and the contrast is very solemn—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9, 14).

All true believers, then, are members of this family, and in that respect are designated "saints"—not only on account of their separation from the rest of the world, and the holy service to which they are called, but on account of the Divine life of which they are partakers. The title is not confined in Scripture, as it usually is with us, to a distinguished few, but is applied to all who are thus united to God the Father by His Son through His Spirit. They come short, alas! even in the best instances, of the high and holy vocation wherewith they are called, but still they are owned and acknowledged by God as His children, and are thus knit together in one communion and fellowship.

It is this family—one portion of it belonging to the Old Testament dispensation and another to the New, existing in different lands and ages of the world, part of it in heaven and part of it on earth—"the upper and the lower family," as the Jews were wont to call it—distinguished

inwardly by one spiritual life and outwardly by one Christian profession—it is this family of God which is described in the next chapter by the Apostle when he says, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6).

This is the ideal of the Christian Church, and this is the only Church which will be eventually recognised by Him who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men. To us who are not gifted with omniscience or discerning of spirits, the visible Church is the body of those who profess His truth, are baptized into His name, and observe His ordinances; but all who belong to it do not necessarily belong to that spiritual communion to which properly the name of Saints belongs. A visible Church with its external ordinances and terms of communion is, from the very nature of the case, indispensable in our present state; and the commands concerning our union with the visible Church and our observance of its appointed ordinances are clearly laid down in Scripture; but still we must not forget that this is not enough for our salvation. In order to that

there must be vital union with Christ Himself; there must be forgiveness of sin through faith in His precious blood; there must be renewal of heart by His Holy Spirit; there must be willing and faithful service, which springs from love to Him.

The judicious Hooker, who is so distinct and copious in speaking of the Church as a visible body, is equally clear in speaking of the Church as the mystical body of Christ. He says:—"That Church of Christ, which we properly term His Body Mystical, can be but one; neither can that one be sensibly discerned by any man, inasmuch as parts thereof are some in heaven already with Christ, and the rest that are on earth (albeit their natural persons are visible) we do not discern under this property, whether they are truly and infallibly of that body. . . . They who are of this society have such marks and notes of distinction from all others, as are not objects of our sense: only unto God, who seeth their hearts, and understandeth all their secret cogitations, unto Him they are clear and manifest. . . . If we profess, as Peter did, that we love the Lord, and profess it in the hearing of men, charity is prone to believe all things, and therefore charitable men are likely to think we do so, as long as they see no proof to

the contrary. But that our love is sound and sincere, that it cometh from 'a pure heart, and a good conscience, and a faith unfeigned,' who can pronounce saving only the Searcher of all men's hearts, who alone intuitively knows in this kind who are His?"

So that while there is, and must be, a visible Church on earth, and in it a visible communion of saints, there is within that Church a still more sacred shrine, and a still more holy fellowship. There is a Church as seen of men; there is a Church as seen of God. We cannot ignore the one without a breach of duty and of charity. We cannot overlook the other without a forgetfulness of truth, and of our own salvation. We must beware, on the one hand, of that easy and fashionable but deceptive religion which contents itself with the profession of orthodox doctrines, or the observance of appointed ordinances; we must beware, on the other, of that arrogant and selfish spirit which, relying on its own strength or spirituality, considers itself independent of those visible means of grace which have been appointed by God for the personal and mutual benefit of all His children.

This twofold view of the Church of God, if it seem on the one hand to narrow our view as to

its extent, will help to widen and deepen our ideas as to "the communion of saints," for it will show us how manifold and how real that communion is. But does it really narrow our views as to the extent of the Church of God? Does it not rather expand them? Are we not too prone to ask, with the querulous disciples, "Lord, are there few that shall be saved?" Are we not too apt to exclude from our ideal of the Church those who do not belong to our own communion, or to include in it only those who agree with us in certain views concerning the doctrines or ordinances of religion?

And do not our ideas enlarge when we come to think of all the saints of God who lived in all the ages before Christ's birth, and of all who have lived in all the centuries ever since? Do they not take a wider range when we remember the great multitude which "no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues," who shall stand at the last before the throne of God, having "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb?" It is when we dwell on thoughts like these that we begin to realise that outside our own narrow communions there are and have been saints of God, with whom perhaps we cannot sympathise in respect

of all their views, but with whom we can and ought to sympathise in the best of bonds, as members of the one great family of God. We come to recognise the family likeness even where we cannot trace the ecclesiastical genealogy, and gladly admit the spiritual relationship even where we cannot verify the mode of admission to it.

And we can do all this without prejudice to our convictions or surrender of our principles. We can cultivate Christian charity without any compromise of our distinctive beliefs. "I humbly hope," says Archbishop Trench in one of his charges, "that we may never forget amid all the wretched antagonisms, divisions, and strifes of the present time, that there is a Church invisible, which enfolds and embraces all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; which embraces these, to whatever confession they belong, these and none else but these."

Such feelings are sure to be awakened by a devout contemplation of "the communion of saints," and they will not only enlarge the spirit of charity towards those who differ from us, but they will cheer us with the conviction that amidst all those differences and divisions which we so deeply deplore there exists an underlying unity, the full extent of which we shall not be able to

perceive until the whole body of the Church is at last gathered into one.

There is, thank God, a growing tendency towards unity, both external and spiritual, amongst the people of God, but the cultivation of that desire will be best promoted by a closer personal communion with God, and a clearer realisation of what is meant by "the communion of saints." It will never be furthered by unworthy compromises, or indiscreet concessions, or loud protestations of fellowship, but by the deepening of spiritual life, and a clearer manifestation of God's grace amongst those "who profess and call themselves Christians."

But beside this cultivation of charity towards others, a realisation of the communion of saints is calculated to have a direct influence upon our daily life and conduct.

"To belong to a great family," says a thoughtful writer, "or to a great society, or to a great nation, is, if rightly viewed, a man's noblest birthright." Is not this the feeling which has so often stirred men to heroic enterprise, or sustained them amidst the greatest difficulties? To know and feel that one belongs to a race which has both a history and a reputation; that there are deeds of worth and prowess which are

emblazoned on the family or national records; how these things lift men above themselves, and urge them on to be worthy of the name which they inherit! And when we apply this to the subject before us; when we remember the exalted name which Christians bear; when we call to mind the graces and the deeds of those who have borne it before us; when we think of the glorious company of the apostles, of the goodly fellowship of the prophets, of the noble army of martyrs; yea, when we think of many a lowly saint of God still living amongst ourselves in usefulness and obscurity, and of many a precious one translated from us into heaven who was Christ-like here on earth, and by intercourse with whom we have been profited and blessed, do we not feel a fresh and holy enthusiasm, a burning desire, that we too might live for God, and love and serve Him as they have loved and served?

Is it not then that we feel the deep meaning of the collect that He who has "knit together His elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of His Son Jesus Christ, may grant us grace so to follow His blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which He

has prepared for them that unfeignedly love Him"?

I have often felt that a wider acquaintance with missionary work would help us to fuller views of this communion of saints. How it enlarges our conceptions on the subject when we think of those who are being daily won by the Gospel to the knowledge of Christ, and are being enrolled by baptism into His Church, and are bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit in heathen lands; some of them laying down their lives for the sake of the truth which they have received! Even to read or hear of these fresh accessions to the family of God expands our views and deepens our sympathies.

But what must it be to draw near along with them to the throne of grace, and to join with them at the Lord's Table in the feast of love—that most sacred expression and pledge of this communion? We have doubtless often felt the sacredness and sympathy of such communion while we worshipped with our fellow-Christians in the church at home; and we know how much this fellowship in the sanctuary tends towards unity and mutual regard in a Christian land; indeed, this effect of it helps to enforce the duty, while it enhances the privilege of public worship. But what

must it be to feel that the negro, or the Hindu, or the Red Indian who kneels beside you as your fellow-communicant, in the midst of heathendom, is one with you in the brotherhood of Christ? Those who have enjoyed that privilege have told us that it was a new experience which they never could forget, and one that enabled them to realise, as they never realised before, the meaning of this article of our Creed. It is things like these which enable us to understand "the communion of saints," how far it reaches and how widely it extends; how it overleaps all earthly boundaries, and social distinctions, and intellectual differences; how it ignores clime, and colour, and tribal peculiarity; how it embraces the humblest, and does not disdain the meanest; how it compiles for itself a calendar, not limited, like ours, to a few exalted names, but which traverses the world to enroll the whole family of the redeemed, and thus anticipates the time when we shall celebrate in heaven an "All Saints' Day" for the universal Church of God.

And this reminds us of a truth insisted on again and again in the New Testament, namely, the mutual interdependence of the members of Christ's Church. Not one of them is really independent of another. They are each one necessary

to the welfare and completion of the rest, and that, too, in ways that we wot not of. In family life the helpless infant, or the sick child, or the weak invalid may be as necessary to the development of domestic affection as the manly youth, or the active sister, or the thoughtful mother are to the prosperity and happiness of the home. And so in the Church of God, the rich and the poor, the feeble and the strong, the learned and the unlearned, the gifted and the ungifted, all lend their combined but oftentimes unconscious and imperceptible influence to the growth and welfare of the great spiritual family. To use an illustration of the Apostle, taken from the human body and applied to the Church of Christ:—"The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary" (1 Cor. xii. 21, 22). A Christian noble like Lord Shaftesbury may be needed to lift the factory hands of England and the street Arabs of London towards a higher life, but an humble Christian nurse was just as necessary to prepare their future benefactor for his philanthropic work. A devoted missionary like Johnson may be indispensable for training the emancipated slaves of

Western Africa in religion and civilisation, but Sara Bickersteth, a poor negro girl, his own child in the faith, was the only minister of consolation available to sit beside his fevered bed in the lonely ship, and to pray with him and for him in his dying hour. Such is "the communion of saints;" such is the use which the heavenly Father can make of each for the good of all. Thus they "grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. iv. 15, 16).

We have said that superstition is to blame for having concealed from many by its unwarrantable intervention the real meaning and advantages of this article of our faith. We know how it has led to that "invocation of saints," which is one of the "fond things vainly invented" which our Church has condemned and renounced. We know how it has led to Mariolatry and given to the creature the honour which belongs alone to the Creator. We know, too, how a sickly sentitiment, "intruding into those things which it hath not seen," has amused itself with irreverent

fancies and wild speculations concerning the departed. Let us not be hindered by these errors and follies from recognising that we have a real fellowship with the saints in heaven, a fellowship of life and hope, of expectation and desire, of service and enjoyment. Let us not forget that there is an intimate union and conjunction with them as members of Christ's body, a oneness and identity with them in the family of God. Even now, while here on earth, "we are come," as the Epistle to the Hebrews reminds us, "unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling" (Heb. xii. 22–24). Death does not dissolve the union which binds us to all God's children, because it cannot touch that life on which our union rests. The Church Militant and the Church Triumphant are still one, children of the one Father, servants and soldiers of the one Lord, still doing His will, still engaged beneath His banner:—

"One army of the living God,
To His commands we bow;

Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are passing now."

A few glimpses are vouchsafed to us in Holy Writ of the employments and engagements of the blessed dead, but what special engagements belong to them in respect to us, what knowledge they have concerning us while we linger here below, or what other links may bind them to us still, we do not know, and it is useless to inquire. Enough that they are with Christ, in happiness and in service, and that if we are Christ's we soon shall be with them, sharing both their occupations and their felicity.

When Faraday was asked what he thought his occupation in heaven would be, that true philosopher and earnest Christian bowed his head, clasped his hands, and closed his eyes, and fervently exclaimed, "Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him" (Isa. lxiv. 4). Not different was the spirit of the saintly Baxter when he wrote—

"My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with Him."

Another practical and important lesson we may

clearly learn from the history of those who have departed this life in God's faith and fear, and that is to follow them even as they followed Christ. With such a crowd of witnesses—witnesses, if not of our course, at least witnesses to our heavenly Father's faithfulness to them in theirs—we may well rejoice and be thankful for their blessedness, and pray to be imitators of their graces and finally sharers of their joy. These are the thoughts which close the prayer in our Communion Service "for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here in earth." We do not pray to them, we do not ask them to pray for us, but we lift up our souls to God and say, "We also bless Thy holy Name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear, beseeching Thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples that with them we may be partakers of Thine everlasting kingdom." Surely the sainted dead have thus a mighty influence upon those they leave behind. Their presence influenced us for good when they were here; their memory is still a power over us for good now that they are gone; their faith and patience and charity quicken and strengthen ours; we loved and honoured them while here on earth, and we do not cease to love and honour them now that they are in heaven.

But if loving regard and reverent esteem be due to the memory of departed saints, let us not forget the practical love which should be manifested to living ones, and especially to those poorer or more afflicted members of Christ's family who are left amongst us to prove our love and to call forth our sympathies. It will not do to remember dead saints with affection and to treat living ones with neglect. And yet, alas! how often they are overlooked or forgotten. It was not so when David said, "Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to Thee, but to the saints that are in the earth" (Ps. xvi. 2). It was not so when the early Churches of Macedonia and Achaia remembered "the poor saints which were in Jerusalem." It was not so when the great Apostle who indited my text gave commandment to the Churches of Corinth and Galatia "concerning the collection for the saints." And there remain still the gentle word of comfort to be spoken, the loving act of helpfulness to be wrought, the kindly visit of sympathy to be paid, and the brotherly and the sisterly service to be rendered to those who stand in need of them. Remember that a day is coming when He of whom "the whole family in heaven and earth is named" will recognise both the service and the motive. "Inasmuch as ye have done

it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

Thus we see that "this article of our faith" is intensely practical as regards the present, and sublimely elevating as regards the future. It nurtures faith, it strengthens hope, it deepens charity. Amidst the jarring discords of the world, and the unworthy divisions of the Church, it assures us that there is still a union and a communion of saints, of those who, however imperfectly, love and serve one Lord, and desire to love and serve one another for His sake. It enlarges our conceptions of God's grace to guilty sinners. It tells us how heaven is being peopled from day to day by the redeemed from among men. It urges us on to extend this communion by making known throughout the world that glorious Gospel by which men are taught and brought into the Church of God. It teaches us to exercise forbearance towards those on earth with whom we hope to live for ever in heaven. It enforces the lessons of charity towards all, and especially towards His household of faith. It reminds us of the heritage which we already enjoy as members of the great family of God, and of the privileges and responsibilities which it entails. It tells us of the still more glorious inheritance with the

saints in light, when all shall be gathered in, and when (to apply the language of our Burial Service) "we, with all those who are departed in the true faith of Christ's holy name, shall have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in His eternal and everlasting glory."

Brethren, is that communion of saints to be ours, then? If so, let us take good heed that we realise the beginnings of it now. Let us make sure of an interest in Christ by true repentance of our sins, and by a living faith in His atoning sacrifice. Let us see to it that we possess that hidden life, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, which will constitute us true members of the family of God. Let us not only bear the name of Christian on our brow, but endeavour, by God's grace, to have the very image and character of Christ engraven upon our lives. Let us love and value the visible Church, and hold its faith, and observe its ordinances, but above all let us take good heed that we are truly and spiritually members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN DOCTRINE AND LIFE.

By the Rev. H. C. G. MOULE, M.A., Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

My remarks on this subject shall take their departure from a very familiar Scripture sentence, 2 Tim. i. 12, "I know whom I have believed."

It is tempting to dilate on the surroundings of the words, for few parts of the whole canon of the Epistles present a more instructive and affecting object of study, at once from the supernatural and the natural points of view, than this last dying Epistle of St. Paul. But it would be to diverge unwarrantably to do this. One point only it is lawful to notice, the insistance of the writer upon doctrinal firmness and faithfulness, and his own use of doctrine, of the inmost doctrines of grace, in the immediate prospect of the hour of death. Observe how the soul of Paul, full of the Holy Ghost, and now about to enter eternity, turns with an extraordinary emphasis to the fact of the Divine inspiration and Divine authority of "every

Scripture" (iii. 16). Hear him as he appeals to the sensitive heart of the younger disciple to "continue in the things he has learned, and has been assured of," on grounds not merely of subjective impression, but of objective authority. Hear him as he repudiates the rationalism, which doubtless claimed to be spiritual and mystic, but was rationalism none the less, of those who said "that the resurrection was past already" (ii. 18). Remark his solemn summing up of the reason why Timothy should "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," a reason which in its brevity combines the threefold cord of supernatural prophecy, supernatural event, and supernatural teaching—"Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my Gospel" (ii. 8). And then see how for himself, on the verge of that supreme experience of our mortal life, the act of dying, collecting himself for the last submission and the last victory, the Apostle grasps for his own peace no mere generalities of belief, but the deepest and highest truths of the whole revelation—"He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose, and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the

appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality into light through the Gospel" (i. 9, 10). All this powerfully illustrates the principle that there is a connection of the strongest and most vital kind between Christian life, whether in action or suffering, and Christian doctrine—the certainties of revealed truth and their right expression.

But now, for a somewhat fuller discussion and illustration of that principle, I recur to the sentence with which I began—"I know whom I have believed." In those words I find indicated on the one hand the necessity, in the life of faith, of doctrinal clearness and decision; on the other the necessity, if that clearness and decision are not to be purely abortive, cause without effect, means without end, of a living acquaintance with a Divine Person, and a living manifestation of that acquaintance in action and suffering.

May He of whom, and of whose truth, we are about to treat, and who overlooks and overhears, mercifully teach and guide!

I see, then, in this passage, a solemn suggestion of the necessity of doctrinal clearness and decision, of settled views of truth, if we would deal aright with our Lord Jesus Christ, and live aright for Him.

It may seem, for the moment, that this inference from these particular words is not obvious. Are thoughts of dogmatic firmness, of the precision of creeds, articles, and definitions, really in place here? Is it not the first and most obvious fact of the passage, as Christians have so often remarked, that the writer does not say, "I know *what* I have believed," but, "I know *whom*"? It might be said, with even a sort of indignation, that the passage positively excludes the idea of "the dry bones of doctrine" in favour of a warm intercourse of the soul with Jesus, in which cold and complicated statements shall be forgotten in the felt pulses of His heart.

Such a protest would have undoubtedly thus much of truth in it—that most sacred lessons *are* conveyed by the presence of the word "whom" and the absence of "what." The dying Apostle does indeed go, direct and by a spiritual necessity, to his Lord's Person, to his personal Lord, to the close embrace of his eternal Friend, the Lover of his soul. Nothing else will do in view of his extremity and desolations, all men forsaking him, and eternity about to close over him. And, let me add, nothing less will really and fully do for my reader, and for myself, not only in the hour of woe, of death, of judgment, but in the experiences

of the present hour, be they as common as they may.

Nevertheless, I return to my point. Let us look a little further into the words, and into the thing. When I speak, or think, of going direct to my Lord and Saviour, of finding rest in His love and faithfulness, of safety in His arms and on His breast, how am I sure of the reality and solidity of the terms, so warm and tender, which I thus employ? I may perhaps reply that my certainty is by the Holy Spirit, who teaches, who illuminates, who sheds abroad Divine love in my heart, and glorifies Christ to my inner man. But the reply again is obvious, that, in the first place, the special works, and the very being, of the Blessed Spirit, are matters of pure revelation, of revealed doctrine; and that, in the second place, His holy work of enlightenment and sanctification, most certainly as to its overwhelming rule, presupposes always some definite doctrine, some positive Divine information, about the Saviour's work and person. Whether directly from the Holy Scriptures, or by sure conclusions from them, whether in doctrinal words read, or doctrinal words spoken, somehow or other, *information* about Him the man must have, if the Spirit is to unfold before the soul His glory. It may

be much, it may be little, but it must be some. And if it is Divine, if it is true, if it is in Scriptural proportion, then the more of it the better, sooner or later. But I repeat it, there must be some, and, in the very simplest stages of enlightened and living faith, that some is not little in its significance. No sooner have I pronounced the words Saviour, Redeemer, Son of God, Lamb of God, Priest, King, Brother, no sooner have I thought with comfort of the precious blood-shedding, or dwelt with bright anticipation on the prospect of my presence with my eternal Friend at death and in eternity, than I am in the very midst of the doctrine of Christ; for every one of these ideas is due to Divine instruction about Him. In this, through this, the Holy Spirit works on me and in me. Through the doctrine He shows me Christ, and the way to Him, and my part and lot in Him, and my treasures in Him, and my coming heaven with Him. Let me add that through the doctrine, very largely, He shows to me *myself*. Not altogether so indeed; for myself and its states are in a certain sense those objects of thought and knowledge of which alone I have quite immediate cognisance. Nevertheless, the Spirit, by the revealed doctrine about the heart, brought home by Him to *my*

heart, develops in me a far fuller and more fruitful knowledge of its evil, of its need, and of how grace can deal with it, than I could possibly attain by an eternity of mere introspection.

Living knowledge of our living Lord, and of our need of Him, and of our relations to Him for peace, life, testimony, service, consistency, is given by the Holy Comforter alone. But it is given by Him in the great rule of His dealings with man, only through the channel of doctrine, of revealed, recorded, anthenticated truth concerning the Lord of life. Does the happy soul, happy because brought to the "confidence of self-despair," and to a sight of the foundation of all peace, find itself saying, "O Lamb of God, I come," and know that it falls, never to be cast out, into the embraces of ever-living love? Every element in that profound experience of restful joy has to do with doctrine, applied by the Spirit. "O Lamb of God" would be a meaningless incantation were it not for the precious and most definite doctrine of the sacrifice of propitiation and peace. That I *may* "come just as I am" is a matter of pure Divine information. My emotions, my deepest and most awful convictions, without such information, say the opposite; my instinct is to cry, "Depart, for I am a sinful man." The

blessed doctrine, not my reveries, says, "Nay; He was wounded for thy transgressions; come unto Him." Is the soul conscious to its depths of moral weakness, of moral helplessness, amidst the temptations which, working deep within, find there "the flesh" to respond to them and work with them? and does it look with the expectancy of faith to its Deliverer, and find Him true? It is doctrine, accepted and assimilated, which has everything to do, from one side, with that deliverance and holy triumph. The man's decisive experience of rest and freedom *is* decisive, *is* deeply different from a vague and precarious aspiration, in proportion to the recognition by his mind, along with the acceptance by his will and affections, of doctrinal revelations. It is bound up with his grasp on the believer's peace with God by Christ for him and his power in God by Christ in him. He ponders the treasures drawn from the doctrinal mine of his union with Christ, and as he ponders, lo, the gold changes into the current coin meant for use in the market and on the journey of human life, life lived in the flesh by faith in the Son of God. Does the man set out upon a path of service, the service of man for God and in God? Does he persevere amidst discouragements, and coldness, perhaps amidst mis-

representation or ingratitude! Deep amidst the secrets of his life, if it is indeed a life of holy zeal, and of holy peace and power, lie the doctrines of the Gospel, recognised, assimilated into thought and action. He is impelled to labour for the salvation of others by a clear recognition of what salvation is for himself a sinner, as he has seen it in the Word of God, and by a solemn, awful, tender recognition, on the evidence of the same Word, of "what the end is" of the broad way, entered by the easy gate. He perseveres because he sees Him that is invisible; and he sees Him "in the face of Jesus Christ;" and he knows Jesus Christ, by the Spirit, through the doctrine of the Word. And when he draws towards the journey's end, and exchanges the trials of the pilgrimage for the last trial, "the river that hath no bridge," why does he address himself in peace to die, this man who has been taught the evil of his own heart and the holiness of the Judge of all? It is because of doctrine. He knows the covenant of peace, and the Mediator of it. He knows, and he knows it through revealed doctrine only, that to depart is to be with Christ, and is far better. He knows that the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But he knows, with the same certainty, that God giveth us the

victory through our Lord Jesus Christ; and that His sheep shall never perish; and that He will raise up again at the last day him that has come to God through Him. All this is doctrine. It is made to live in the man by the Holy Ghost given to him. But it is in itself creed, not life. It is revealed information.

As we follow this into detail it is true all along. The most living Christian experience, if it is to be better than unauthorised, unverifiable fancy or feeling, is in its essence connected with revealed doctrine. Without that warrant, the warmest emotions about what we denominate God, or Christ, may have no more solidity of fact beneath them than the excitement of a devotee who weeps before the effigy or the relic of some saint of legend, who perhaps never lived or died in historical fact at all.

I would not be so idle as to say that every believer must, or can, enter into the same fulness of doctrinal truth. But I speak of the principle of the thing. Some doctrine the little believing child must have, and the old believing cottager who cannot read. To know whom they trust they must know about Him; they must know something of the doctrine of the Son of God.

It is perfectly true that we may carry our advo-

cacy of the claims of doctrine too far. Saints of God have sometimes drawn the revelations of the Holy Word into refinements of inferential definition which are out of proportion, manifestly, with that Word. But our present risk is the very opposite. It is to regard persons more than truths, teachers than teaching. It is to make moral earnestness the first thing and the last. It is to look for the glory of God somewhere else than in the face of Jesus Christ, as that face is seen in the mirror of the Word, in the light of the Spirit.

So, with the Apostle's dying letter open before me, and reading in it this ardent utterance of personal reliance on a personal Redeemer, I plead for the supreme importance of sound and solid doctrine, of clear views (unfashionable phrase !) of what is revealed about Christ, His person and His work, about His sacrificial blood, about His indwelling life, about His cession and intercession above ; about the work, and walk of faith, and the peace and fruitfulness of the life which in holy penitence is lived by faith in Him. And I may add my personal conviction that if we seek the best and truest summaries and formulations of the truth which is in Christ, and assuredly such things are in their place as needful as ever, we cannot do

better than go to two very accessible documents, the Nicene Creed, and those Articles of our Church which deal with the Redeemer's work and person, and the sinner's need of Him, and the believer's life in Him.

As we close, I turn to that "other side of the shield," the necessity, the bliss, of a personal acquaintance with the living Lord Jesus Christ. We have looked awhile on what some may call the "dry bones" of doctrine, but which are in fact the *vertebræ* of the backbone of life. But now we look again at St. Paul's words, and we embrace the blessedness of a personal knowledge of—not it, but HIM.

If we would live, if our Christianity is not to be a synonym for barren mental speculation, or somewhat commonplace philanthropy, or merely carnal contentiousness, or, worst of all, a cloak for a life of entire and complacent selfishness, then we must know HIM and abide in HIM. Among the doctrines of the faith is this, that if I know all mysteries, and have not holy love, I am nothing; and that, on the other hand, Christ can dwell in my heart by faith, by the work of the strengthening Spirit.

Who shall describe the happiness of direct personal acquaintance with Him, as it were

behind (not without) all thinking, and all work, which thought and work He yet can fill and can use? It is the reality of realities. In it the most advanced and instructed believer, and the most timid beginner in the life of faith, alike have part and lot. It gives wings of light to the highest musings and most accurate studies of the believing theologian. It warms and sweetens the arduous tasks of the believing toiler for the souls and bodies and homes of men. It smiles on the dying bed of the little child, and refuses to fall out of the aged mind which drops everything else in its palsy.

I have read, in that admirable book, Dr. D. Brown's *Memoir of Dr. John Duncan*, of an old professor at Prague, who, after a life of study and teaching, fell into imbecility. He wandered about the streets as in a dream. But when he met children, he laid his hands on their heads, and murmured over them the two words, *Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός* — Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ.

A few years ago, in India, died a little native boy, of twelve years old. Almost unawares he had learned the doctrine, and had found the Lord. He died without baptism, but he was indeed born again of the Spirit. Too weak to converse,

almost too weak apparently to think, he twice over, at the last, folded his skeleton hands, and slowly repeated those unfathomable words, "The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Oh, to die so! May we, in life, be able to give a good reason of our hope, and of our work, with meekness and fear. May we, in death, know HIM, know WHOM we have believed.

"I COME:"

FOUR UTTERANCES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

By the Rev. H. C. G. MOULE, M.A., Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

I. THE "I COME" OF INCARNATION.

We have entered the weeks of Advent, of the Coming. Our Church in Scripture and Collect has begun again to remind us that the whole sphere of the Christian's life and work moves on the poles of the First and Second Advents. In the First we have the strong foundation of all true faith and the spring and secret of all true love, as the Spirit explains it through the Word. In the Second we have "that blessed hope, that blissful, happy hope, the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us."

In a short series of Scripture meditations I take the word "Coming," to listen to it from the lips of the Lord Jesus Himself, in four places of His Word. Our attention will be given first to His

"Lo, I come," as He prepares to descend in the First Advent. In the fourth place we shall think on His "I come quickly" as He announces His Second Advent. And between these we shall meditate a little on two intermediate Advent words, the "I come" of Glorification, "Now come I to Thee," and the "I come" of Indwelling, "I will come in to him."

I enter on the work of exposition, simple as the aim and method will be found to be, with a solemn and special sense of the vanity of words without the Spirit, of the hollowness of the tinkling where the Lord of Love does not give and guide the message. May He in great mercy not leave us alone, writing or reading. Then, and only then, something shall be done which shall be His, not ours, "to edification, exhortation, and comfort."

So I take now the "I come" of Incarnation. We have it in both Old Testament and New, in the Psalms (xl. 6–8), and in the Epistle to the Hebrews (x. 5–9). By the latter passage, for all who accept without reserve the interpreting authority of the Christian Scriptures, we have it settled that the ultimate intention of the Holy Ghost in the earlier passage was to reveal to us the thoughts and purposes of the pre-existent Messiah. Whatever may have been the "con-

sciousness" of the Psalmist (and there is nothing to entitle us to *assert* that that consciousness was not purely and directly prophetic, in a rapture of the Spirit, any more than to *assert* that it was), this was the inmost mind of his Inspirer. So with two hands the Scripture lifts for us the veil from this most holy secret, and shows us "the mind" of the pre-existent Christ, when in the eternity which is before and above our time He, the Son with the Father, the Son of the Father's love, the Son beloved before the foundation of the world, willed to come down, and to take flesh, and, being true God, to be also true man, to do the will of the Father and to save us.

> "There, on the heights of primal Deity,
> Before all worlds, Messiah willed to part
> Himself from glory, and in destined time
> So parted, for us men; descending thence
> With voice of consecration, *Lo, I come*
> *To do Thy will.*"

Have we anything in the Word of God more wonderful and precious in its kind than this revelation? With a holy brevity and simplicity characteristic of Scripture, absolutely unlike the imaginative detail with which even a Milton can only mar the theme of the counsels of God, we are here suffered to overhear the Voices that speak to One Another upon the Throne. By implication we hear

One say "Go," and then Another answer "Lo, I come." It is an answer in the tone of nothing less than Godhead, for it is the tone of absolute Free Will, issuing in action of absolute wonder and merit. But it is also an answer in the tone of Divine but real son-like subordination. It speaks the mind of a Personality which puts itself at the disposal of the personal Will of Another; wholly uncompelled to submit, but submitting with a Divine moral fitness which makes perfect harmony with a Divine moral freedom.

What shall we say of the words, "O my God," heard as we listen at the Sanctuary door? Can it be that even antecedent to Incarnation, and as the *Divine* Son, the Coming One could thus address the Sender? Is the eternal "Subordination" of the Son a warrant for such a thought? It is hard to think so, without running into inferences or associations which pass the border of Christian orthodoxy. May we not rather see in the words a wonderful anticipation, a *prolepsis*, in the Divine thought of the Speaker? As He says "I come," not "I go," as one who is already in the region to which He descends, so He says, "O my God," as one who has already taken on Him the nature in which He was to be able to say, "We know what we worship."

But however, here we have this Divine, pretemporal "I come," spoken by the Son to the Father. Here is this supreme example, this infinite example, of the beauty and glory of a true and holy surrender and service; the bliss and liberty of a true "Thy will be done." Many an echo has that voice had in human time, as believing sinners one after another have come to the SON of God, and while receiving His merit have received also His Spirit under the Divine law of union, and have found in that Spirit the power to tread in their measure in His steps. Many a life has discovered, in finding Christ, the once unimaginable blessedness of an unreserved submission, and obedience, and servitude to Another's holy will; the joy of the Lord, involved in the full acceptance of that rule, "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord." Tersteegen's verse gives utterance not to his own heart only, but to innumerable hearts of the past and the present:—

> "Thou sweet beloved Will of God,
> My anchor-ground, my fortress-hill,
> My spirit's silent, fair abode,
> In thee I hide me, and am still."

And all these holy joys, born out of the depths of a true surrender to that Will, are descendants

of that Divine and primal joy of the Son, when He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O My God; I am content to do it; yea, Thy law is within My heart."

As we listen, and worship, an Apostle stands beside us and tells us, by the Holy Spirit, something in solemn detail of what this "I come" was to mean for Him who said it (Phil. ii. 5–8). "Being in the form of God, in the reality and glory of Godhead, Christ Jesus did not deal with that Divine and rightful equality as a thing to be used jealously and as for Himself; He made Himself empty, taking on Him the form, the reality and the seeming, of the bondservant of the Father; He came to be man among men, in truth and in guise; He obeyed, and still obeyed, even till the supreme obedience to us rendered in death, the death of the Cross."

Let our Advent meditation set us pondering that familiar but inexhaustible paragraph of the Philippians again. The Psalm gives us the expressed purpose of the obedient Redeemer in the heaven of heavens. The Epistle gives us that, but also (what indeed the Psalm also does in its mysterious after-strain) the Redeemer's action upon that purpose; the historic work of Bethlehem, and Galilee, and Gethsemane, and Calvary

itself. And the Epistle, more articulately than the Psalm, reminds us that while the inmost and ruling intention of that most blessed Surrender was the doing the Will of the Father as such, the glorification of the Father in all His Will, the thought of "us men and our salvation" was as perfectly present under that supreme intention as if there had been nothing else to think of upon the Throne. For how does St. Paul come to speak at all of the Surrender of Christ? It is to bring it home to the believer that he is to "look upon the things of others." This, he would have us understand, as far as we can ever understand it, is what Christ did when He dealt as He did with His equality, and took on Him the nature in which He was to serve the Will of God and to die for us. He looked upon our things. He cared, oh how greatly did He care, for us.

I have heard it said that that faithful servant of God, the late Professor Scholefield of Cambridge, could never get through the Nicene Creed at his Communion Table in St. Michael's Church without an audible faltering when he said the words, "Who for us men and our salvation came down from heaven." Mr. Scholefield was the very opposite of demonstrative and emotional. His manner, not his heart, was somewhat reserved and

cold. But he lived near Christ, and meditated closely and deeply upon redeeming love; and he had indeed entered into the depth of this wonderful "I come."

As we stand listening to the "voice of consecration" which thus even on the Throne speaks of surrender and service, let us briefly remember some of the definite truths which it tells us by the way.

1. It speaks of the central place which the Atoning Work of the Lord Jesus holds in the eternal plan of redemption. The Psalm, interpreted by the Epistle, puts this into solemn prominence. "I come;" here speaks the pre-existent Saviour in view of the mystery of His holy Incarnation. "I come;" as if to say, I am already on the way, already in the work, already taking Manhood of a mortal Mother, so that the Two Natures, whole and perfect, never to be confused, never to be divided, shall meet in ineffable union under one Person, one Christ. But *why?* What is the purpose in the foreground of the eternal thought as it is indicated in the Psalm and explained in the Epistle? Is it to sum up Humanity under a new Head? Is it to "redeem by Incarnation"? The express purpose is to do the work which "sacrifice and offering," as offered

under the law, could never do. It is that the Incarnate might "put away sins by the sacrifice of Himself." Such, if the Epistle to the Hebrews is our guide, was the ruling purpose in the Divine self-consecration. The Consecrator had in view above all things His death, His sacrifice, His blessed expiatory work. "He took part of flesh and blood," with His brethren, "that *by means of death* He might destroy him that had the power of death."

2. It speaks of the pain, and yet joy, of an untold Humiliation; of the Lord's being "made in all things like unto us, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of His people." It speaks of His Divinely-willing consent to take upon Him the sinless limitations of manhood, to experience as Man what is meant by growth; what it was to weep, and to wonder; what it was to say "Thy will be done," not only in the light of the heaven of heavens, but under the olives of Gethsemane; and to cry to Him whose will He was eternally content to do, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and to commit His out-going human spirit into a Father's hands in death. Are we to go further, as many a teacher does now, and say that He was consenting also to other limitations,

to such limits of knowledge, and, we must add, of moral insight (for this cannot be excluded), as should make it possible, should make it actual, that He should share illusion and mistake with us? Was He consenting not to know whether the Old Testament books were authentic or fabricated, whether the Jewish ritual were ordained by His Father at Sinai, or invented and passed off as Mosaic in days far later by human authors? Did He submit to be misled about the authorship of Psalm cx., and to base a therefore inconclusive argument on the error? To say that He would another day judge mankind, and that the Ninevite penitents of Jonah's day would be present then to put His contemporaries to shame, while Jonah's story was not history? We all know that things like these are now said about the Lord Jesus Christ's *Kenôsis*. This is not the place to enter far into the supremely solemn problem. But one thing I may at least say here: that it is a grave mistake to class under the idea of a willing *Humiliation* such a voluntary acceptance of the capacity to be mistaken—and to mislead. To submit, in His Divine surrender, to the necessities of weakness and grief, and even to consent to the abnegation of a present consciousness of omniscience, is one thing. But it is a far different

thing when the Lord is conceived as consenting not to know when He was or was not mistaken as a Teacher. Such a consent, if conceivable, would fall under a very different head of thought from that of a holy Humiliation. May we not see in the very passage before us an intimation just to the contrary of such a theory of the *Kenôsis?* If we are to go confidently to Philippians for the fact of a *Kenôsis*, we must deal in equal confidence with Hebrews for statements about it. And here is the statement of the Epistle to the Hebrews: that the Christ in His pre-existent glory had the Mosaic ritual full in view, and at the Father's will came on earth alike to meet its inevitable defect and to fulfil its Divine import. His view of the Old Dispensation and its order, in the days of His flesh, was but the continuation of His view of it upon the Throne before He came.

But let us return to our main theme, and close. "Lo, I come." So thought, so said, the Christ of God in view of Bethlehem and of Golgotha, seen from the heaven above all heavens. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God." And we are His, we are in Him through grace. Then be it ours, this Advent-time, as if never before, to say the like in our little measure, for His sake and in His name.

In view of trial, of temptation, of humiliation, of the cross, whatever be our cross, let us draw from Him the power to say not only "I go," but "I come;" the power to "delight" "to do the will of Him that sent us, and to finish His work."

2. THE "I COME" OF GLORIFICATION.

"And now I come to Thee." Let us think a little of this word spoken by the Son to the Father in the great High Priestly Prayer. We have already sought to listen to the same Speaker addressing the same Hearer. Then the Voice was uttered on the Throne, in the eternal glory above all time. Here it comes from human lips, in a dialect of earth, and literally in the hearing of a little group of mortal, sinful men. But it is the same Voice, the same wonderful and all-blessed Speaker; and the same infinite and personal Father is addressed again.

I will say as little as possible of the surroundings of the words, their blessed context. We have all pondered the treasures of this Holy of Holies of the Bible, the seventeenth chapter of St. John; its words about the finished work of the Son, and the glorification of the Father in the Son, and of the Son by the Father's side; and

about the eternal life given by the Son to the given ones of the Father; and about the safe-keeping and sanctification of those given ones, and their mission in the world, and their prospect of being with their Lord where He is, to behold His glory. We have often mused upon it all, and shall find in it a fathomless material for meditation to the last. "Read me that chapter whereon my soul first cast anchor," said John Knox upon his dying bed; he referred to this great prayer of the Lord, new and inexhaustible as ever at His servant's journey's end. This "I come to Thee" will give us now an abundant theme for thought in the presence of Him who said it.

In the first place, it is the Divine Son's most solemn and most tender affirmation of the personal and distinct being, the personal and eternal love, of the Father. In all the recorded prayers of Jesus Christ this is one of the most precious elements, this blessed theism where the theist is the Beloved Son. The disciples listen to the Master as He is "alone praying;" they follow the direction of His "eyes lifted up to heaven;" they hear Him say, as He looks beyond all that is visible, "Father, holy Father, righteous Father; I know that Thou hearest Me always; I have known Thee; I have glorified Thee; I had glory

at Thy side before the world was; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." And as they watch and listen, knowing Him who looks up and speaks, and who sees in that unseen depth the infinitely loving and therefore infinitely personal One who to Him is Father, they learn as nothing else can teach them how to "believe in God," and to "believe the love that God hath towards them." They do not learn to despise the true and converging paths of testimony which from every quarter of existence, within them and without, lead up to the fact that God is. But in the prayers of Jesus they find at once a witness to the mind and a message to the soul which transfigures all such witness, and in a sense soars above it. It becomes as it were a spiritual intuition. They see through His uplifted eyes, and speak with the certainty and rest of His holy soul, while He ascends spiritually in such prayer, as He at length bodily ascended, "to His Father and their Father, to His God and their God."

One humble meditation over the record of the Saviour's prayers is a strong antidote to the poison of a partial philosophy which thinks it has proved that the Infinite cannot be the Personal, and so does what it can to quench the Son of Love. What the Lord Christ Jesus saw in the Un-

seen is there, and is there for His people at this hour.

"Now come I to Thee." Wonderful is the simplicity, the singleness of this prospect. We know something, in history and in parabolic vision, of the glorious *circumstances* of the Ascension. The majestic rapture of the Lord in the body from the Mount of Olives is one side of the picture; the apparition of the Lamb upon the Throne, in the fifth chapter of the Revelation, is the other—the scene where one by one all the concentric circles of created being are beheld and heard engaged in adoration before Him who has been slain to buy a people with His blood, and now lives and triumphs to open the book of providence for their blessing and their glory. We read in one passage after another of the Epistles how "angels and authorities and powers were subjected unto Him" when He "went into heaven," and how at the name of Jesus every knee must bow in His exaltation. But behind and above all these results and manifestations of triumph there lay for the Saviour a region more absolutely blessed still, more infinitely great. It was the embrace, the bosom, of the Father. It was glorification by His side (*παρά σοι*). It was this "Now come I to Thee."

The Christian, as he adores and meditates, cannot penetrate that region. But he can look towards it, and can know that it contains for the slain, risen, and ascended Lord a love and a joy immeasurable, unfathomable—

> "Thought must seek that height in vain;
> All her musings turn to pain."

But faith in the Word of God, and love for the Son of God can in such a sense rise thither as to rejoice with a deep and holy gladness in the personal and exceeding "joy set before HIM." For a season we can forget, as it were, what that Advent to the Father, after the Cross and Grave, means *for us*. We can, we should, sometimes occupy our hearts altogether with what it means *for Him*, for this Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who "came" to the depths of humiliation and expiation to do the Father's will, and now "comes," when the same will now wills His glorious triumph and infinite welcome, to the Father's side, to the Father's bosom, as Son of Man while God the beloved Son. "No one knoweth the Son but the Father." May we not in deepest reverence say, in the same sense, "No one loveth the Son but the Father"? "Weak is the effort of our heart, and cold our warmest thought." And

if the effort were mighty, and the thought were supernaturally glowing, and the heart were sinless the heart would still be finite. But when the Son says "Now come I to THEE," He is on His way to the embrace and endearment which is absolutely adequate to comprehend His infinite beauty, and righteousness, and tenderness, and greatness, and the reason and glory of His humiliation, and the unknown depths of His meritorious Cross and Passion, and the length and breadth of the surrender to the Father's will which "brought Him down." Even so, Lord Jesus Christ, my Saviour, whom indeed I love, but whom not all created intelligences can love enough, Thou art loved to the fulness of Thy Divine and human preciousness and majestic loveliness by Him whose will Thou didst do both in coming down and now in "coming" back to Him. He has indeed "anointed Thee with the oil of gladness," not only in the open light of heaven, but in the sanctuary of Himself. I rejoice for Thee, and with Thee, O my Lord, in this Thy great rest and joy after sorrow.

I have pleaded for occasional, let me rather say for frequent, efforts in due season to direct our worshipping thoughts simply and entirely upon this blessed Home-coming of our Redeemer as an

infinite joy for Himself. I have asked that we should sometimes, as it were, forget what it is in its blessed significancy for ourselves. But we need not, we cannot, long keep the two directions of thought separate. With a holy certainty of process, this "meditation of Him" will prove to be a direct means to a development of our own "joy in the Lord." If I may speak at all from my own experience, a prayerful review of the revelation of the eternal and infinite love of the Father for the Son is a sure secret for the deepest rest and most thankful happiness as we turn to ponder our own part and lot, as believers, in the Son. Our Christmas festival, our keeping of the Lord's human Birthday, shone upon as it is from above by the glories of the "Eternal Generation," is meant to be, and able to be, a blessed "new departure" year by year in our insight into this secret. And now this "I come to Thee" is meant to lead us the same way. As we follow the Lord Jesus Christ up in His heavenly Advent, and know that the eternal tenderness of the Father for His Beloved is (speaking after the manner of men) now enhanced as that Beloved One ascends as Son of Man, and from the Cross and Grave, we rest and rejoice for ourselves as well as for Him. We read a little more of the inner glory of those

words, "He hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His Love;" "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

And let this our personal repose in the thought of the love of the Father for the Son infuse an ever-growing reality and life into the thought of the Son's work for us above. We have it revealed, in large measure, what that work is. He is there to represent us His people, to intercede, to mediate, to rule for us in heaven and earth, to prepare a place for us, to dispense from His high-priestly throne all the blessings of that eternal covenant which His sacrifice has sealed and made our own. With all the definiteness and practicality of a faith which accepts such definite revelations as they stand, we are to make use of our Lord Jesus Christ continually in these respects; to know, not only to hope, that this He is for us and this He does for us, and to draw with entire confidence on Him thus known. But let us also habitually pour into all such views of Him this underlying and blessed remembrance, that He whom we thus trust and use is not only a mighty Victor, a lawful Claimant, a rightful King, a faithful Promiser, but the Son of the Father's Love; who in His Ascension not only went "to receive a kingdom and to return," but "came to

Him," to rejoice and rest in the infinite closeness and gladness of the Incarnate and Sacrificed Son with the welcoming Father.

Ought not the simplicity of our Gospel faith to be at once maintained by such remembrances, and developed into ever-deepening insights into our rest and our strength in Christ? If I do not mistake, many a Christian's much-lamented coldness of affections and waverings of will are greatly due to neglect of "consideration of HIM," in Himself and in His loving glory. Sometimes an exaggerated introspection, sometimes that sort of attention to the precious doctrines of grace which forgets to study them in living relation to the living Redeemer, too much dissociating holy principles from their vital root in Him Who is the Truth itself, hinders this direct "consideration of Him." And then either anxiety or coldness creeps into the believer's life, and spoils its testimony, and obstructs its intended happy power and influence. Let us look up from ourselves in the line of the words, "Now come I to Thee." Let us read into all our grace-given convictions of sin, of justification, of sanctification, the light and life and peace of "Now come I to Thee."

At last it will be ours to follow Him in a more personal sense along that line. In our dying

hour, unless indeed He shall have first fulfilled His final "I come quickly," we shall look out, as only the dying do, upon the unseen and eternal. Shall it not then be our blessed lot, after a humble and prayerful habituation to the sound of this "I come to Thee," spoken by the Son our Brother, to say our own "I come" in His dear name, in great peace?

"Je monte vers notre Père en pleine paix," were the words of blessed Felix Neff, "the Apostle of the High Alps," on his death-bed in 1829. The phrase was borrowed from a French version of John xx. 17, where the Lord Jesus speaks to the Magdalene of His approaching home-going to the Father. With holy simplicity Neff made His Lord's words, in His Lord's name, his own. Well might he, and well may we, add to them, "en pleine paix," and follow them, as he did, with the cry, "Victoire, victoire, victoire, par Jésus Christ!"

3. THE "I COME" OF INDWELLING.

From the glorification of the Saviour we come at once to His promised and offered indwelling in His disciple's heart. From His word to His Father, "Now come I to Thee," we pass to His

word regarding His servant, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

The two subjects come before us in the right spiritual order. The Lord Jesus went away, He "came to the Father," that He might "not leave His people comfortless, but come to them." He ascended, that the Holy Ghost might be given "to them that believe on Him." And it is by the Holy Ghost that we His members are joined in the eternal life to Him our Head; it is by the Holy Ghost that He "manifests Himself" to us, and "comes" (with the Father) "and makes His abode" with us, and "takes up His dwelling in our hearts by faith." Physically, bodily, He went at the Ascension "out of the world;" He passed into a mysterious remoteness from us. In the language of our Church, "the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ" (His physical human frame, glorified or unglorified, as distinct from His body mystical, the Church) "are in heaven, and not here." We look up thither, and "look from thence for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change the body of our humiliation to be like to the body of His glory." But the Ascension, or more precisely, its blessed sequel, the Pentecostal Effusion, was the occasion for the Lord's coming spiritually into a new

and unspeakable nearness to us. Then, and not before, on the open surface of the history of redemption, began to be realised in its fulness that promise, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." And it is this wonderful Advent in the believing soul that we come now to think about, in the presence of "Him who dwells within."

"I will come in to him." The context is solemnly familiar. All know the Laodicean Epistle; all have felt the awful penetration of its reproofs, convictions, and threatenings. Not least have we done so who are the ordained ministers of Christ and His flock; for we remember that the words were immediately addressed to a chief pastor. To borrow a reference (Col. iv. 16, 17) which I know does not bear primarily on *this* Epistle, to many of us clergymen it has been said by the Spirit, "Read the Epistle from Laodicea. . . . Archippus, take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it." We have heard the heavenly Master speaking through these verses, and finding us out in some deplorable moment, it may be, of spiritual self-complacency, of satisfaction with our own words or works, and telling us that at such moments we are "*the* poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked." And the very name of

Laodicea has derived thus in our minds an association of shame and alarm. Most rightly, from one side. But then let the convinced clergyman, the convinced Christian, remember on the other side that if there are Laodicean threatenings there is this most glorious, this most tender and endearing Laodicean promise, "I will come in to him."

Let me dwell on this for a few moments. Before we think directly of the promise, reflect upon the fact that it is a promise to a reproved and threatened man, to a disgraced worker for God, to one who all unawares but in sore reality has slidden back, till he is hardened in the miserable frost of his own good opinion, wretched substitute for the joy and fellowship of his once-beloved Lord. To such a servant does the Master offer this wonderful indwelling, this intimacy of presence, and intercourse, and heavenly food. Just possibly these lines may meet the eyes of some brother in Christ whom the Laodicean convictions have pierced and wounded, waking him up to see how far he has declined while all outside has looked fair. And the first instinct of the soul at such a time is not shame only, but hopelessness; at any rate it is thus very often. The dread words of Hebrews vi. perhaps sound in the man's inner ear, and he knows not what

to do. What shall he do? This Epistle tells him. Let him at once believe (I do not say feel, but *believe*—1 John iv. 16) the love of his Reprover; "as many as I love, I rebuke." And then let him "be zealous and repent;" let him "stir himself up" (Isa. lxiv. 7) to "turn round" in thought and will from self to Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ will then be heard to say nothing less than this: "I will come in to him."

Among the treasures of Scripture nothing is more wonderful, more beautiful, more precious, than the promises to the disciple who has slidden back. "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, *for I am married unto you!*"

But it is time to leave, though not to forget, this context of our Lord's personal promise of an inner Advent. Let us look at the promise itself.

Full of holy pathos as well as Divine instruction is the imagery in which it lies. A dwelling-place is before us, and its door is fastened from within. The shadows gather, for it is the hour of the evening meal. "Behold a Stranger's at the door;" yet not a Stranger, for He has once been within. He is the sovereign King of house and inhabitant. When first He redeemed and set free the man, bringing him into His own blessed bond service which is perfect freedom, many a visit was

paid by the Master to the man's cottage, and bright it was with His presence at board and hearth. Now, somehow, the King stands outside, and the door is barred, while all within is dark, and cold, and out of gear, and the man sits in the gloom, moody and miserable, or sleeps heavily on the unrestful bed. The King knocks, and speaks. He will not use force of hand. Not that He has no gentle omnipotence, no prevalence and secret drawing, or that He will not use it. But "He enforceth not the will;" His will shall take effect in and through His servant's repentant willingness. Once let the servant listen, and walk to the dark chamber's door, and move the bar and lift the latch, and without a moment's more ado, without one prefatory condition, without one grudge because of the treasonable past, the King will enter. And His entrance shall be the signal for light and warmth within, for love and friendship and plenty, and a wonderful mutual hospitality. He will at once sit down to the table, and let His servant be His host. And He will then Himself make His servant the guest, and be Himself the bountiful Host, within the man's own lately famished and gloomy dwelling.

Such shall be the secret spiritual Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ in this soul which lets Him

in at His knock, at His request. It shall be a definite and personal Advent, an In-coming to a presence and abode such as indeed was *not* just before. Jesus Christ shall be in that man's inner chamber of the soul, in a sense and after a manner positive and special. He shall be there not to find but to make light and order within; to be the fire on the hearth, the lamp on the table. He shall be there as guest, to feed upon the one provision the man can set before Him, the one provision which the King cares to accept, and which He loves to taste — the presented and surrendered will and life of the servant. And He shall be there as Host, crowning the poor table with the living bread and the new wine of the eternal kingdom, transfiguring the narrow chamber into His own "banqueting house," feeding and filling the self-starved being with Himself, with all He does for His happy followers and all He is in them. And the imagery of the table suggests not only food but converse. The woeful estrangement, the dull rebellious silence on the one side, the solemn censuring reserve on the other, are over. Host and Guest, Guest and Host, they look into each other's face, they hear the utterance of each other's heart: "I am thine, thou art mine; nothing between."

"I will love him, and will manifest myself to him;" "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;" "Eat, O friend: drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

We have viewed this Advent of the Lord into the house of the soul specially with regard to the case of a Christian who has declined and sunk low. Such is its primary reference, and it should never be forgotten. But it is not exhaustive of the glorious passage. Primarily, the reference is not to the first blessedness of conversion, nor again to the later experiences of the watchful and earnest Christian. But it willingly lends itself to a secondary application to both, an application full of life and peace. To the just awakened and alarmed conscience, to the soul just beginning to feel its need of a Saviour, and at least to think that He can and must be its rest and life, this wonderful "I will come in" may be the very voice and hand of effectual grace. Here is He who cries aloud "Come unto Me," saying also "at the hole of the door," something if possible more wonderful still, "I will come in to thee," and offering nothing less than His own presence, and friendship, and blessed sustenance, at once. And all this on the one condition of opening the door. And to the diligent, wakeful, loyal disciple,

who yet perhaps sometimes feels that the presence of his holy King is not all to him which it seems to be intended to be, that there is a certain reserve and reticence between him and his Lord even in the midst of true work for Him, and a sense of exhaustion and inanition in that work as if he were but half-fed, does not this passage say that indeed, in Jesus Christ, "there is more to follow"? The door of the inner house, or rather of the inner chamber, is barred sometimes not by a Laodicean self-satisfaction, but by such a pre-occupation with work as tends to an oblivion of the Master; by such a neglect of Scripture amidst a thousand efforts as leaves the Christian practically ignorant of what the offers of his Lord are, and what are the blissful possibilities to which he is called in an experience wholly free from fanaticism and "strange fire." Many a door, where there is substantial loyalty in the life-purpose, is thus barred; many a useful, honourable course of service is allowed somehow to miss a secret of freedom, and insight, and joy, which would not revolutionise it, perhaps, but would certainly transfigure it. And again, there are hearts which fully recognise the greatness of the promised blessings of Divine presence and communion, and deeply long to know them, but mis-read the revelation

of the way to win them; thinking of them as rewards reserved for the late stages of a toiling pilgrimage, rather than as present and most generous provisions for this day's Hill Difficulty, or Valley of Humiliation, or Town of Vanity. And to all such souls speaks this promise of the Spiritual Advent. It reveals the fact of a living and glorified Saviour's willingness and purpose to enter into the very sanctuary of our being, in a presence which conveys the calm fulness of peace and joy. And it reveals a wonderful simplicity in the means to this blessed experience. "Open the door." No laborious process is in view, but an action of very simple and obedient faith. The highest privileges of the Divine indwelling are ours, says St. Paul to the Ephesians, not by might nor power, but "by faith." The man must trust the promise, with the trust which acts on it at once. He must trust the Promiser, with the trust which lets Him have His holy way in the chamber which all the while is His, inhabitant and all. "Weak faith can only do weak works, but it can open a door!"

Let us open the door this present hour. And then the Lord shall "shut us in" with Himself. And in our toil, and amidst our trials, and in the hour of temptation, and under all that makes up

life's complicated exterior, we shall "live behind our work," in the peace and strength of this Advent and Presence of Jesus Christ, our Guest, our Host, our living Bread, our ever welcome Master and King.

4. THE "I COME" OF RETURN.

Four times over in the Book of the Revelation the glorified Saviour speaks explicitly the "I come' of His sure and speedy Return. "Behold, I come quickly; hold fast that thou hast" (iii. 11): "Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book: behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me; He which testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly, Amen" (xxii. 7, 12, 20). Great is the emphasis, mighty and holy the import, of such a personal promise.

In a last meditation of our Advent series I take up this "I come." Let me at once explain that I do so not with any intention to discuss in the least detail the prophetic prospect. Not that I ignore the sacred claims of unfulfilled prophecy on our diligent and prayerful study. Not that I have no convictions about any particulars of its mysterious programme, although year by year I

feel constrained to think of the subject more as a learner and less as a teacher. Not that I can ever yield to the arguments or reveries which would dissolve the glorious prospect of the Second Advent into a matter of mere ideals and principles, a pictorial summary of processes always going on, and results always being attained, or, at best, of one coming crisis or another in which good in the abstract shall triumph over evil. In some simple lines, written just twenty years ago, I sought to repudiate such a view, and they still express my deepest convictions at least as much as ever:—

"Was all a parable, a dream, some figurative birth
Of human change, some date supreme of progress on the earth?
No promised Lord, whom man once saw, nought but some vast event,
Some gradual self-working law, in vague embodiment?
And hath He thus indeed return'd, and we knew not the while,
Whose hearts for Him within us burn'd, who long'd to see His smile?
Cold, treacherous thoughts! We faint, we weep; yet hear the angelic strain—
Jesus, the same, from yon blue deep *shall so return again.*"

Even so; the two angels of the Ascension spoke too explicitly to allow of a mystical solution of the blessed Hope into an idea; and the Lord of the Ascension is indeed explicit about it Himself. But my earnest desire is to write now

on this last "I come," in such a way as to meet, if possible, the hearts of all Christians who look forward to the literal and glorious Coming, as the great Church of God has on the whole looked from the first. It is possible, I believe, by His grace to write so. The mysterious glories of the Thousand Years, and the questions gathered round the word pre-Millennial, may *practically* be laid out of view sometimes in this matter, and believing students may sometimes meet, as it were, behind them. It is somehow possible for *all* who love and submit to the Written Word, and hold heartily that prediction is a Divine and mighty reality in it, to look up *together* into heaven, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, loving His appearing, looking for the Saviour, who shall change our body of humiliation, and who shall welcome us to meet Him in the air. It is possible, somehow, for us *all* to be thus standing with our loins girded and our lamps aflame, as men waiting for their Lord, and not knowing in what watch of the night He will come and knock on a sudden.

"Behold, I come quickly; surely I come quickly; this same Jesus." What common ground for loving, solemn meditation may we find here?

In the "quickly" of the promise we are all to read that the disciple's attitude, like that of the Israelite of the Exodus, is to be that of the man whose shoes are on his feet, and his staff in his hand; *ready*. It is an old story, but never out of date, certainly not in this age of enormous worldliness, this "hour when they think not." "Let not the world our rest appear," no, not even when it looks at us through well-loved and fruitful work, or through the joys of a pure and happy home. "All these things are dissolving" (2 Pet. iii. 11); in the very midst of them, in His own time, the Thief in the night, who is also (blessed be His name) the midnight Friend, will be here—and a very different order of things will begin with that arrival. Is the prospect being sanctified and cherished? Are we maintaining it in the soul's sanctuary as a dear and joyful one, so far as our own personality is concerned? We may, we must. A beloved friend was but lately telling me of a strangely vivid dream of long years ago. Through the bedchamber window seemed to shine on a sudden an indescribable light; the dreamer seemed to run to look, and there, in the depths above, were seen three Forms, one (in the chances of a dream) unknown; one the Archangel; One—the LORD

JESUS CHRIST. And at that most sudden sight that soul, the soul of one over whom, to my knowledge, the unutterable *solemnities* of the unseen are wont to brood with almost painful power, was instantaneously thrilled with a rapturous joy, a worshipping love, unspeakable and full of glory; "My Saviour, O my Saviour." Well, not in dreams, but in our waking hours, let us cultivate such a view of Him as shall naturally spring up into this unutterable welcome, come when He may, come in upon what He will; the King in His beauty.

Then, dropping the immediate thought of the "quickly" in the promise, let us think quite simply of that part of it (which is indeed the heart of it) which tells us that it will be personally He, and that with Him in unutterable personal contact, we, each one, I and you, will have to do. Here is the great difference between the plain Scriptural promise of the Return and any explanation of it away into ideas. In the light of Scripture, the Return will be a time, a moment, a crisis, never to eternity to be forgotten, of interview between the disciple and the Master, the servant and the Lord, at the solemn close of this work-day. Labourer for Him, speaker in His name, "fetch that day to thee, and make it thy

company keeper." You are on your way, I am on my way, to give account (I do not know how, nor do you, but it will be an unutterable reality when it comes, and perfectly free from haste) of the things done in the body, of what we have "gained by trading," of how we have lived for Him. Thanks be to Him, from one supreme view-point we shall then be "hidden" in Him, robed and wrapped for our acceptance in our great Examiner's own righteousness, able to meet Him with Himself. But not from every point of view. Saved by faith, that is to say, by Christ embraced for our all, we shall yet be somehow scrutinised on the ground of work, and we shall know what He thinks of the scrutiny. "The fire shall try every man's work, of *what* sort it is." Shall we work to-day with the salt of that prospect in our work?

Let us put aside for this purpose all ideas and associations of physical convulsion and alarm in nature. Let there be for this purpose no "flaming heavens," nor voice of the trumpet. Let the interview between the Master and the bond-servant be quiet and retired. Suppose yourself to be summoned to report yourself to your King in some earthly meeting-place, say Jerusalem, and to be travelling over undisturbed lands and seas with

the prospect of seeing at the other end the visible face of Jesus Christ, and being examined about the whole past by Him. It would be a solemn journey, would it not? Yes, for the truest saint on earth this hour, though it would also have its elements of untold blessedness. But we are all on our way, across the commonplace surface of daily life, to such an interview when the Lord comes; I mean to an interview in which, even for the saved ones who shall be with Him for ever, an inquiry as complete as Christ can make it will take place, and the report upon it will be made as He can make it; "He will manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have his praise of God."

"How shall I meet His eyes?" As regards acceptance, only by looking from them to His hands and His side, and hiding there. As regards all other aspects of the matter, by walking in the light with Him now, on the way to see Him face to face in that examination then.

But do not let even the holy searching of the "I come quickly" becloud, though it chastens, the holy gladness of it. Here, as everywhere, "grace doth much more abound" for every one that believeth. "We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ;" yes, we must

indeed. But "it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Therefore we *will* be humbly bold to say, with longing and with love, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

One other and quite different aspect of the truth of the promised personal Return let me speak of as we close. A bright and blessed light is cast by it upon the sacred mysteries of the Intermediate State, the living and happy repose of the blessed ones gone before us, the "holy and heavenly habitations where the souls of them that sleep in the Lord Jesus enjoy perpetual rest and felicity." We well know how reserved is the voice of Scripture about the details of that state. It indicates a deep distinction between it and the resurrection state, in which our nature will be rebuilt, and more than rebuilt, into its glorious wholeness. The intermediate state is the state in which the noblest part of that nature lives indeed, in joy, and rest, and holiness, but yet in separation, in dislocation, from the total. Not one word of Scripture really authorises our prayers for the holy departed ones, as if in the sphere of their present existence they needed anything to augment or to complete its repose and purity; but

yet we may surely gather that for them and not for us only the coming in of the final state will be a most glorious gain and crown. And all this makes us doubly prize every indication in the Word of God that that "dear throng" is meanwhile living not in a realm of however tender shadows, but in the vivid glories of the presence of the seen and worshipped Lord. One such indication, as it seems to me, lies here, in this sure prospect of the Return of "this same Jesus, in like manner;" this same Jesus, in that same mysterious but most real body, the body of His glory. We are here reminded and assured that as He went up, and as He shall return, so now He is; "this same Jesus," in that same blessed body. We know little of the conditions of the life of the blessed out of sight; but we know enough for strong consolation when we know that they are "with Christ," and that the Christ with whom they are is none other than "this same Jesus" in the body of His glory. Here is our one localisation of the place of bliss. It is where He, so conditioned, is, and where His people are with Him.

"We walk by faith, not by sight," says the Apostle, contrasting (let us observe) the life before death with the life not of resurrection but of the

intermediate heaven. Therefore, by the contrast, *they walk by sight*, not by faith. They are so there with Christ that indeed and in most glorious literality they see Him. And so shall we, as "one by one we go to the glory none may know."

And all the while, "the sky, not the grave, is our goal." "To depart and to be with Him is far better" than the very best of the highest holiness and most spiritual gladness here. But it is not absolutely and finally the "far better" thing. Nothing is that but the state which will be brought in when He acts upon the mighty promise, "I come quickly."

"Here we bring these brief studies to an end. We have listened to the voice of the Coming One as He speaks of one coming after another—to Incarnation, to the Father, to the heart, to the waiting Church. Let His own Spirit, in great mercy, take whatever has been His in the words written, and give it power to live and work within us. Let us welcome now the humiliated and glorified Lord into our soul's opened inner room, and let us look up, in the pathway of loving service, for His sure keeping of His final promise. Blessed are all they that wait so for Him.

THE CHURCH.

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I.

There are few subjects in theology of more interest and importance than the doctrine of the Church. It has been said, with some truth, that the Church is the beginning and end of Christian life. Every Christian receives the seed and the food of his spiritual life from the Word and the Sacraments which the Church administers, and in the Creed he declares his belief in the Holy Catholic Church as involving that Communion of Saints in which he hopes to live eternally. Salvation is, indeed, a matter between the individual soul and the Saviour, but the result of salvation is not a mere individual life. Neither in this world nor in the next do men live unto themselves, or by themselves. It is essential to the nature of man that he should be a member of a society, and in proportion as the society is perfect, and his union and communion with it is

complete, is his nature fully developed, satisfied, and turned to its due use. The Holy Catholic Church, in its ultimate development, is a society of this character, of which every saved soul will be a member, and in which every such soul will have its place and office. Looking, therefore, to the source of Christian life on earth, we see that the growth of Christ's kingdom depends, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, upon the manner in which the Church on earth fulfils its duty and answers its end; while the ultimate perfection of Christian life depends on the perfection of that Communion of Saints which will be realised by the Church in heaven.

But, in common with all other Christian truths of supreme importance, the doctrine of the Church has also been the subject of the keenest and most anxious controversy. It seems melancholy, from one point of view, that the most profound and precious of all truths, such as those of Justification or the Holy Communion, should also have been those which have occasioned most conflict and division in the Christian world. Yet reflection will show that such a result is inevitable. The apprehension of Christian truth is indissolubly bound up with Christian life, and varies with the changes and the varying depth of Christian

experience. It is not a mere matter of scientific observation, but of practical knowledge, of moral and spiritual struggle, of due submission to the teaching of the Holy Spirit; and, like the acceptance of Christianity, it puts the soul of man to a severe moral and religious probation. In proportion, therefore, as a doctrine, like those just mentioned, touches the roots of the spiritual life, must it of necessity challenge opposition, be obscured by any eclipses of the Divine light in the soul, and must its apprehension vary with the fluctuations of spiritual experience. The doctrine of the Church has exhibited, perhaps, the most instructive illustration of this principle. Other great doctrines have chiefly been the subjects of dispute at special crises of the Church's history—the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation in the fourth century; the doctrine of original sin in the fifth; that of Justification in the sixteenth, and so on. But the nature of the Church, the conditions of union with the Church, the authority of the Church, the organisation of the Church—these questions have recurred incessantly, in century after century, from the earliest times. The first notes of controversy are heard even in the earliest documents of post-Apostolic literature—the Epistle of St. Clement

of Rome and the Letters of St. Ignatius. Then follows the Montanist controversy, then the vehement disputes in the time of St. Cyprian respecting membership of the Church, the unity of the Church, and the relation of the Sacraments to the Church. This controversy is revived in the Donatist schism, and forms one of the chief subjects of St. Augustine's thought and work. After his time, the history of the Middle Ages might almost be described as one long struggle to establish the Roman conception of the Church —a struggle in which all the best and worst capacities of Churchmen were engaged, in which enthusiastic and unselfish devotion, the highest spiritual aspirations, the most splendid intellectual capacities, the strongest practical ability, were strangely allied with unscrupulous craft, with deliberate forgery, and with unsparing force and violence. The attempt broke down at the Reformation, when Luther established principles which struck at the root of the organisation and authority of the Church of his day, and set on foot new influences and new organisations which have changed the face of the Western Church. Before the sixteenth century was over, the great controversy of the Reformation, not only between Romanists and Protestants, but to a great extent

among Protestants themselves, had once more centred around such questions as what the true Church was, and what was its organisation.

Accordingly, the great English divine Field, writing in the days of King James, says that "the consideration of the unhappy divisions of the Christian world, and the infinite distractions of men's minds, not knowing, in so great variety of opinions, what to think or to whom to join themselves (every faction boasting of the pure and sincere profession of heavenly truth, challenging to itself alone the name of the Church, and fastening upon all that dissent, or are otherwise minded, the hateful note of schism and heresy), hath made me ever think, that there is no part of heavenly knowledge more necessary, than that which concerneth the Church. For, seeing the controversies of religion in our time are grown in number so many, and in nature so intricate, that few have time and leisure, fewer strength of understanding, to examine them; what remaineth for men desirous of satisfaction in things of such consequence, but diligently to search out which, amongst all the societies of men in the world, is that *blessed company of holy ones*, that *household of faith*, that *spouse of Christ*, and *Church of the living God*, which is *the pillar and ground of*

truth, that so they may embrace her communion, follow her directions, and rest in her judgment."[1] Similar words might be written at the present day. It remains the chief weapon of the Romanists to insist on communion with the Roman Church being necessary to salvation; and our intestine and domestic troubles, whether within the Church of England herself or in relation to other Protestant communities, turn largely, if not primarily, on questions respecting the nature, constitution, and authority of the Church. Recent discussions have given increased importance and urgency to these questions, and alike in Church and State they involve some of the gravest difficulties of our time. It will be opportune, therefore, to attempt to review the teaching of the Scriptures and of the Church of England on this great subject, and, so far as our limits will allow, to illustrate the main principles of primitive and reformed doctrine concerning it. This, with God's help, is what will be attempted in the following articles.

[1] Epistle Dedicatory.

II.

What is the Church? That is the first question to be considered in dealing with this subject; and as all controversies relating to the Church and its offices depend on this question, so there is none which has been more variously answered. The term, in fact, is extremely ambiguous, and all manner of fallacies lurk in the conscious or unconscious interchange of its various significations. Dr. Thomas Jackson[1] says that "there is no word or term used either in any scientifical, moral, or popular discourse which hath so many, so much different significations or importances as the word *church* hath, whether we take it in the Greek, Latin, or English." The privileges, authority, or attributes which may belong to "The Church" in one signification, are by tacit assumption applied to "The Church" in another signification; and the influence of the Roman teaching on this subject, and of teaching akin to it, depends chiefly upon the illusion which is thus produced. In any verbal confusion of this kind the only satisfactory course is to fix our attention upon realities rather than words, and to ascertain what are the facts with which we have to deal. Men

[1] *Works:* Oxford Edition, vol. xii. p. 7.

are, no doubt, referring to great and solemn realities in speaking of the Church or of Churches; and if we distinguish clearly what these realities are, we shall be best able to see our way through the controversies connected with the use of the word.

Let us turn, then, to the Holy Scriptures, and particularly to the New Testament, to ascertain what are the facts of Christian belief and experience on this subject. Now the first of these facts, and the most momentous in its nature, is that our Saviour has established a holy society, of which all the members are in immediate union with Himself through the Holy Spirit. Take, for instance, the Epistle to the Ephesians, as affording a peculiarly clear and vivid description of this society. St. Paul there says (ch. i. 22) that God has put all things under our Saviour's feet, and "given Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." He describes Christians (ii. 20) as "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building"—or, each several building—"fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together

for an habitation of God through the Spirit." In other words, this great communion of Christians combines the analogies of a temple and a living body. Like a temple, it is composed of separate stones or parts, built together on one foundation with a single corner-stone; but these individual stones or members are at the same time animated by a Divine Spirit which constitutes them one living body. In the fourth chapter the Apostle develops still further and more clearly this analogy between the Church and a living organism. He says that there is "one body and one spirit," and he describes the life of the Church by a detailed comparison with the living frame. The whole Divine economy of the Church is designed "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministration, for the building up of the body of Christ" . . . that we may grow up in "all things into Him which is the Head, even Christ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Now this is the description of a society of men who are united with each other by virtue of their union with Christ. This union, moreover, is

not a merely external one, but consists in an actual vital participation of Christ's spirit and life, just as the members of the human body are vitally united with the head, and actuated by it. No man, therefore, can be a member of this body who is not in vital union with Christ through the Spirit. That is the first condition and law of membership in the Church which the Apostle has in view. It is in this sense, by another analogy, that the Church is also described, in the same Epistle, as the spouse of Christ: "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the Word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies; he that loveth his wife loveth himself, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church; for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." It

is evident how the Apostle seizes analogy after analogy, derived from the closest and most intimate unions in nature and human nature, to express the intensity of the union between the Saviour and the members of the Church he is describing.

Yet, after all, St. Paul's images of the oneness of the union between Christ and believers fall short of the analogy by which our Saviour Himself describes that union. He, too, employs analogies derived from the union of organic life. "I am the Vine; ye are the branches." "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." But He uses another analogy which far transcends all these, and which none but the Son of God Himself could have authorised us to contemplate. In the great prayer (John xvii.), in which He finally commends His disciples to His Father, He compares their union with Him to nothing less than His own union with that Divine Father. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I

have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." Such a statement of the nature of the oneness of Christians with Christ cannot be contemplated without awe as well as humble gratitude. To be brought into a union and communion with Christ which can be compared, on the authority of the Saviour Himself, with His own union with the Father, is a dignity and privilege which we can scarcely realise. The blessings it involves cannot be adequately noticed here. But what we are concerned with, at this stage of our discussion, is to observe that it reveals to us a Church or community of men, of which the law is that its members are united to the Saviour by a bond so profound and sacred as to be comparable with the relations between the Persons of the Godhead itself. The existence of such a society and communion of men, united in one body, of which Christ is the Head, and of which the Holy Spirit is the life, is the first of the great facts which are revealed to us in the New Testament on this subject.

But this being the case, one other fact inevitably follows, namely, that this sacred body and com-

munion of true believers is, in our present condition, not distinctly visible as a society. It is quite certain that not all members of the bodies which are called Churches on earth are members also of Christ in that organic and profound unity of which the New Testament speaks. Whether or not there are true members of Christ who do not belong to any visible communion is a question to be afterwards considered. But it is certain that there are nominal Christians who are not true Christians, and members of the Church on earth who are not true members of Christ's body. It follows that that Church of which St. Paul speaks in the passages we have been considering, is, and must be in our present circumstances, a practically invisible body. It is a great point of controversy on this subject whether the distinction, on which the Reformers insisted, between the visible and the invisible Church be a just one, and in the succeeding papers we will recur to it. But the weighty considerations on which we have been dwelling are enough to establish as an incontrovertible fact, apart from all verbal disputes, that the true Church of Christ in the world at every moment, and at this moment, is not a definitely visible body. Its members are united to Christ by spiritual bonds which are not open to our observation, and it cannot be

discerned within the limits of any visible organisation.

III.

In our consideration of the facts of this great subject we have now recognised that the first and greatest of all the realities connected with it is the existence of a body of men who are in organic union with Christ as their Head. This body is, as a whole, by its very nature invisible. Some of its members have passed into heaven, some are still living on earth; and it is impossible for any human eye to select from the mass of living nominal Christians those who are true members of Christ. It is to this spiritual society, in vital union with its Head, that the lofty privileges and capacities assigned in the New Testament to the Church—as, for instance, by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians—are to be attributed. This is the communion which is the spouse of Christ; to this properly belong the designations of One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. There is a secondary sense in which those characteristics may be claimed by visible communities. But to no other body but to the true body of Christ can they be applied without material reservations. Accordingly, as Luther said, the truth that there

is One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church is an article of faith and not of sight. So far as is open to natural observation, the Christian Churches are separated from each other like temporal kingdoms, and many of them are too grievously corrupted, both in practice and in belief, to claim, in any but a qualified sense, the designation of Holy or Apostolic. It is the eye of faith which, resting on the assurances of our Lord and His Apostles, recognises the existence, in all these communities, of souls animated by His Spirit, and so united to their Head, and through Him bound together in one communion and fellowship with one another.

The practical problems, however, by which Christendom has been distracted on this question relate chiefly to the character and position of these visible communities, and we shall again best deal with this branch of our subject if we consider the facts set before us in the New Testament. We there find the word "Church" applied not only to that great invisible Church of which we have spoken, but to separate communities of Christians. Even as early as the missionary journeys of St. Paul, as described in the Acts of the Apostles, we find mention not only of the Church, but of "Churches." The Revised Version, indeed, rejects

the earliest instance of this usage, which appears in our Authorised Version, reading in Acts ix. 31 not "then had the Churches rest," but "so the Church . . . had peace;" and perhaps this is natural as long as the Christian community was confined to the region there mentioned—"Judea and Galilee and Samaria." But in St. Paul's first missionary journey we read of his "ordaining" or "appointing" "elders in every Church," and in his second journey he goes "through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches." From thenceforward, while the Apostle is inspired to reveal the great vision of the One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church, we find the various communities of Christians in their various localities designated as so many distinct "Churches." In Rom. xvi. 4, he speaks of "all the Churches of the Gentiles." He addresses Epistles to "the Church of God which is in Corinth," and to "the Churches of Galatia"—the Christians in each small city, even of the same district, being thus styled a distinct Church. He speaks even of "the Churches of Judea" (Gal. i. 22), thus carrying back the conception of distinctness of association even to the constituent communities of the mother Church of that day. In the Epistle to the Colossians this usage is carried so far that the Apostle even speaks of "the

Church that is in 'their,' or 'her,' or 'his' house, according to the reading which may be adopted. So far is this usage from being peculiar to St. Paul, that it seems very remarkable that in the Book of the Revelation it is not only adopted by St. John, but appears the only one adopted. He writes to "the seven Churches that are in Asia," to "the angel of the Church of Ephesus," "in Smyrna," "in Pergamos," and so on. Nor is this only in his specific messages to these particular communities. In the solemn, universal, and comprehensive charge at the end of this book, the Lord declares, "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches."

Does it not seem as though, with inspired truth of vision and accuracy of expression, the last of the Apostles was unable to adopt that vague generality of language which applies the designation of "the Church" to visible communities, and thus loosely attributes to imperfect, partial, and even corrupt bodies the sacred attributes which belong only to the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic, and therefore, invisible Church? It seems certainly something to give us pause to reflect that the last message of the Saviour, delivered in the most solemn terms by his "Angel," is addressed not to "the Church" but

to "the Churches." In point of fact, as the history of the New Testament advances, we find the Christian community composed, more and more, of a number of distinct societies, each with its special characteristics, its individual life, its peculiar corruptions, heresies, and dangers. In so far as they were uncorrupt, they were animated by one truth, and they were united in one bond of charity. But they still appear in inspired language as distinct communities, and "The Church," as a single visible society on earth, is not so addressed or spoken of by the Spirit of God.

IV.

We have now considered the distinction which exists, as a matter of fact, between the invisible Church of the redeemed and the visible Churches of Christendom, as they may with practical accuracy be described. However men may dispute about words and their application, the fact of the distinction between the two realities is unquestionable, and in the great crisis of the Reformation its recognition became of vital importance. It had indeed been recognised in substance in very early times. Origen had spoken of the *κυρίως ἐκκλησία*, the Church properly so called, and

Jerome and Augustine had distinguished the *Corpus Christi verum* from the visible and nominal Body of Christ. It has been replied, indeed, that neither of these agrees with the invisible Church spoken of by Protestants, the difference being, as Mr. Gore has recently urged, that "whereas the members of the 'invisible Church' are regarded as belonging indifferently to any or no ecclesiastical unity, with Jerome and Augustine the conception is the opposite. The membership in the 'true Church' depends upon membership in the one visible Church on earth. The true Church is a subdivision of the actual Church—its genuine members" (p. 19, n.). So far as there is any force in this contrast, it depends upon the fact that in the time of Origen, at all events, and in great measure, as compared with later days, in the time of Jerome, it was in some sense possible to speak of "one visible Church on earth." The communities which were outside the Church represented by the great Councils could be in some degree overlooked as exceptions. But when we come to the Middle Ages, the division between the Roman and the Greek Churches alone renders it inconsistent with facts to speak of the "one visible Church on earth." Field says of his own times, "The Christian

Church is divided at this day into the Western or Latin Church, and the Oriental or East Church. The Oriental or East Church is divided into the Greek Church, the Nestorian or Assyrian Churches, and the Churches of the supposed Monophysites, as the Jacobites, Armenians, Cophti, or Christians of Egypt; the Ethiopians, or Abyssenes, and the Maronites, who are thought to be Monothelites;"[1] and with respect to the Oriental Churches he observes that "all these Churches and societies of Christians, in number many, in extent large, in multitudes of men and people huge and great, in continuance most ancient, in defence of the Christian faith constant and undaunted (though enduring the malice and force of cruel, bloody, and potent enemies), the Bishop of Rome, with his adherents, judgeth to be heretics, or at least schismatics, and consequently to have no hope of eternal salvation;"[2] and he speaks of "the harsh and unadvised censure of the Romanists, condemning all these Churches as schismatical and heretical." In fact, as history progresses, it becomes unquestionable that there have been multitudes of true members of Christ, and consequently true members of the Church Universal, dispersed amongst various "ecclesi-

[1] Book iii. ch. 1. [2] Book iii. ch. 2.

astical unities," which were not unfrequently in a state of mutual excommunication. Language, therefore, which was admissible, and practically true, in an early Father respecting "the Church," is inapplicable and irrelevant in an entirely different condition of "the Church" or "the Churches." It is enough for our purpose that these early Fathers were forced to recognise the distinction between the true Church and the visible Church; and the true Church within the Church of Origen or Jerome is the "invisible Church" within the Churches of Protestants.

The stress which was laid upon this distinction at the Reformation arose, however, from a practical difficulty which, in another form, is similarly urgent at the present day. "The Church" at the time of the Reformation was a great name to conjure with—greater, in some respects, than we can easily realise at the present day. As represented by the Roman Church, in all its spiritual dignity and its vast temporal influence, it had for centuries wielded a preponderant, if not supreme, authority over men's consciences and the general course of human life. It had gathered around itself, in very great measure, the lofty privileges and the sacred associations of the true Church of Christ; and to resist the authority of "Holy Church" seemed to

many minds little less than sacrilege. The Roman controversialists and authorities accordingly fell back, in their struggle with the Reformers, upon the prerogatives and the authority of "the Church." The answer of the Reformers was, that "the Church" to which this appeal was made—the then visible Roman Church—was not the Church to which Christ had made those promises of perpetuity and unfailing truth from which such an appeal derived its force. Bellarmine said that Luther, in reply to the objection of Erasmus that it was incredible God had deserted His Church for so long a time, answered that God had never deserted His Church, but that the Church of Christ was not that Church which was commonly so called, that is to say, the Pope and the Bishops, but that the Church consisted of some few pious men whom God preserved as a remnant. Allowing for some controversial exaggeration of expression, this statement fairly exhibits the practical origin and importance of the distinction then insisted upon between the visible and the invisible Church. It was not only, moreover, a question of authority which was at stake, but a vital question of the conditions of salvation. If, as Mr. Gore interprets the early Fathers, "membership in the true Church depends upon

membership in the one visible Church on earth" (p. 19), then membership in the true Church in the days of the early Reformers depended, for Germans and Englishmen, upon membership in the Roman Church; and so the Romanists maintained. In answer to this strictly preposterous claim the Reformers revived the conception of the one invisible Church of Christ, and asserted the true conditions of membership with Christ.

We reserve for a subsequent article the consideration of those conditions. Meanwhile, we would observe that the recognition of an invisible society, as that to which alone—κυρίως, or *verè*—the designation of "Church" appertains, is in no way whatever inconsistent with the recognition of a Church or Churches as visible societies founded by Christ, and depending for their organisation and their laws upon His will. Mr. Gore, in the work to which we have already referred—*The Church and the Ministry*—commences by discussing the question, "Did Christ found a visible Church," or, "Did Christ found a Church in the sense of a visible society?" (p. 9). We should have thought the answer, as a matter of fact, was too obvious to need discussing. The Apostles certainly founded a visible society, and if they were the Apostles of Christ, and carried out His

orders, the Church which they founded was founded by Him. But Mr. Gore, under cover of this truism, has insinuated a very different matter, to which he has devoted comparatively little discussion. From the admitted fact of Christ having founded a visible society, he would have us forthwith conclude that visibility is an essential and permanent characteristic of that Church which is His body. The question he has failed adequately to discuss is whether Christ founded also an invisible society, and what is the relation between that society and the visible society or societies which bear the same name of "Church." True believers in Christ, as long as they are in the flesh, are visible, and are required by Christ's ordinance to maintain the closest possible visible unity with each other. For the purposes of this unity the Lord has established the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments. But the question is whether, as Mr. Gore says (p. 10), "Christ did not encourage His disciples to form societies; He instituted a society for them to belong to as the means of belonging to Him," so that (p. 57) "the Christian's spiritual privileges depend on membership of a visible society;" or whether Christ and His Apostles were commissioned to invite men primarily to

union with Him through His Spirit, and, as a consequence of that union, to union with each other. It is perhaps as well that the issue between those two principles should now have been definitely raised in our Church; for on the decision of it depends the great issue between a truly evangelical Christianity and those perversions of the Gospel of which the Roman Church is the worst and most conspicuous.

V.

The conception of "the Church" as a visible society, communion with which is the first condition of salvation, found its most characteristic expression in the famous saying of Cyprian, "*Salus extra Ecclesiam non est*" (Ep. lxxiii. 21), "There is no salvation outside the Church." It is a maxim which has been, and is still, one of the most effective weapons of controversy, and has been used almost as an instrument of torture in compelling consciences to submit to the claims of visible communions, and especially to the claims of the Church of Rome. But its force entirely depends upon the confusion we have pointed out between the true Church, the real body of Christ, which has a practically invisible existence, and

those visible Churches which but partially embody its nature and privileges. The maxim is universally true when spoken of the invisible Church, but as applied to "all such as never were members of any visible Church," it is, as Dr. Thomas Jackson says (book xii., ch. 13), "not universally true; yea, taken universally, it is universally false in respect of time; that is, it never could be verified of all and every one that was *extra Ecclesiam visibilem*, 'out of the visible Church,' in any age." In the first place, as he observes, there was a time when God's visible Church was confined to the offspring of Abraham; but "it were an heresy to say that no sons of men, besides of the sons of Abraham, or such as did associate themselves unto the visible Church then resident only in Abraham's family, were saved; . . . righteous Job was no son of Jacob, yet the son of God." In Christian times, no reasonable man will admit that persons who, for whatever cause, have been cast out of the visible Church to which they belonged, have been thereby necessarily deprived of salvation. The so-called heretics, whom the Roman Church in the Middle Ages excommunicated, and delivered to the secular power to be burnt, were separated from the visible Church, but not therefore, as one of them said, from

the Church triumphant. The only sound sense of the maxim is, that men cannot ordinarily receive the Word of God and the grace of the Sacraments, and thus become united with Christ, except by the agency of some visible society. The seed of eternal life is the Word of God; the ordinary food of that life is the Word of God and the Sacraments of Christ; and these are administered in the Churches of Christ. Moreover, as cannot be too constantly remembered, it is the bounden duty of Christians to live in union and communion with one another; it is a perilous thing, and one requiring strong justification, for a man, or a body of men, to live in separation from the visible Church around them. But when interpreted, strictly or by implication, to mean that communion with some particular visible society is an indispensable condition of salvation, the maxim is a monstrous exaggeration; and it will be instructive, from many points of view, to consider subsequently the illustration which is afforded of various ecclesiastical problems by its origin in the controversies of St. Cyprian's day.

It was, however, as we have already noticed, the first step in the Reformation to undo the spell which the theory embodied in this maxim had cast over men's minds; and perhaps, in

these days, it is not too trite an observation to say that the doctrine by which the spell was undone was that of Justification by Faith. It was by that doctrine alone that Christian souls acquired the freedom and independence by which they were enabled to resist the spiritual authority of the Roman Church. The primary work of the great Reformer was to establish Christian liberty on the basis of the assurance of salvation through direct union with Christ. He recalled the primitive truth that the Word on God's part, and the faith evoked by that Word on man's part, placed the soul in direct communion with the Saviour; and however important, and in ordinary circumstances necessary, other things might be, yet the Christian could, in the last resort, dispense with them all for the purpose of his salvation. Once regenerated by the Divine Word and united with Christ, no human or ecclesiastical power could separate him from his Saviour, and the Church might excommunicate or burn him without any risk to his ultimate salvation. The word of the Saviour, promising him forgiveness, justification, and salvation, had made him free; and though he was the more bound to use his freedom for the good of his fellow-Christians, and in communion with them, no act of theirs could separate him

from the true body of Christ, if his own faith remained true and firm. It was not until this assurance had been infused into the hearts of the Reformers and their followers, that they were able to present a sufficiently bold front to the tremendous array of authority and force with which they were confronted by the Roman Church of that day. They belonged to the invisible Church of the saints of all ages; and secure in their possession of the great realities of salvation, they could resist, without any apprehension of consequences, the false claims, however menacing, of the visible Church. They began with Christ, with His Word and His Spirit, and they proceeded, in the strength of that life and that support, to the reformation of His Church, and, where compelled to do so, to the organisation of new communities or Churches. Their principle was not "*Extra Ecclesiam non est Salus*," but "*Extra Christum non est Salus*;" and they effectually, for all time, shattered the presumptuous claims of the visible Church of those times.

The *Acts of the Apostles* are a sufficient justification for this view of the true order of Christian thought on this subject. That book is the account of the foundation of the Christian Church, and of the Christian Churches, by the Apostles

who held Christ's special commission; and what was their method? Do we read of St. Peter and St. Paul proclaiming to those whom they addressed that a new visible society had been established, and that those who desired salvation must join it? When, in answer to St. Peter's great and characteristic address on the day of Pentecost his hearers exclaimed, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" did Peter tell them that "Christ had instituted a society for them to belong to as the means of belonging to Him"? No; he simply bade them "Repent, and be baptized" every one of them "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," and they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Of course, having repented, having submitted to the name of Jesus Christ, and having been baptized into it, "they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." They were bound to submit themselves to the authority of those Apostles of Christ through whom they had received the grace of repentance and of faith, and to live in the use of those ordinances which Christ had appointed. But they belonged to the Apostles' fellowship because they had received the Apostles' faith, and had acknowledged that same Jesus, whom they had crucified,

as both Lord and Christ. There is a memorable passage soon afterwards, in which St. Peter speaks of the only source in which salvation is to be found; but he says nothing of the Church. "Be it known unto you all that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand before you whole. . . . Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Or, again, when the jailer asked St. Paul, "What shall I do to be saved?" was he referred to the Church? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," was the simple reply. So the same Apostle says, in the Epistle to the Romans, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." It is Christ Himself, in His direct relation to the soul, who is set forth as the only means of salvation by the Apostles. Churches are thus formed of believers in Christ, and it is by a secondary process that believers in Christ are formed through Churches.

VI.

It is a striking commentary on human dreams and "ideals" that the problems we have been considering respecting the claims of a visible Church should have been brought to a critical issue within less than two centuries from the Apostolic era. Within six generations from the death of the Apostle whose last public words are said to have been, "Little children, love one another," Christians were setting up "altar against altar;" the leading sees of Christendom were in angry conflict; the most eminent bishops were exchanging charges of "favouring Antichrist," of being "a pseudo-Christ, a pseudo-Apostle, and a treacherous worker;" and even within particular sees rival bishops were claiming and distracting the allegiance of the flock of Christ. Melancholy as is the spectacle, it is at the same time not without consolation and encouragement, amidst the confusions of our own day, to remember what the Churches witnessed and survived in the days of St. Cyprian. We recommend to those who would fully appreciate the facts a careful perusal of the article on Cyprian in the *Dictionary of Early Christian Biography*. It is an article of peculiar interest and importance at this moment, for its

author is the present Archbishop of Canterbury; it bears the marks of the most laborious, thorough, and earnest study of the subject; and it thus illustrates the lessons which, in the judgment of the present spiritual head of our Church, are to be drawn from the memorable struggles of St. Cyprian's day. It is, in fact, a monograph not only of the first historical, but of the first practical importance; and due attention to the facts and considerations it brings forward would tend to sober, if not to compose, much of the passionate controversy around us.

Without entangling ourselves in all the complicated, though interesting, details of St. Cyprian's episcopal career, we need only call attention, for our present purpose, to a few leading facts. It will be remembered that, in consequence of the severe persecutions of St. Cyprian's day, a large number of Christians, members of the then visible Church, had "lapsed," that is, had in various ways, and in varying degrees of unfaithfulness, denied their Christian profession; and disciplinary questions of the gravest importance arose respecting their re-admission. A numerous and influential party, headed by Novatian, a presbyter of Rome, were opposed to their re-admission to communion on any terms, or after any length of

time. Another party, headed originally by Novatus, a presbyter of Carthage, Cyprian's see, were in favour of their re-admission almost wholesale, or at least on the easiest possible terms. Cyprian, in harmony with the Roman see, and supported by synods of his own province, succeeded in maintaining between these two extremes a just and merciful moderation. The general result, according to our Archbishop, was that no offences were considered to be beyond the regular power of the Church to remit; that no power except that of "the authentic organisation" could fix terms of communion; and that these terms were varied in proportion to the varying gravity of the lapses in question. But the extreme parties refused to accept these decisions, and their passion, combined with personal jealousies, carried them to the length of setting up schismatic communions, headed by schismatic bishops. At Rome, Novatian was consecrated as a rival to the regular Roman Bishop Cornelius; and at Carthage there were actually two rival bishops constituted; one, Maximus, by the Novatianist party; the other, Fortunatus, by the lax party. Such was the spectacle presented by the early Church in the middle of the third century. There were two rival bishops claiming the see of Rome;

and three rival bishops were contending for supremacy within the see of Carthage. To say nothing of other heretical sects which then subsisted, we hardly present a worse spectacle than this, even in the present day; and the power of the Gospel, which lived through such scandals then, may well overcome similar difficulties now.

But it was inevitable that the rival claims of ecclesiastical communities, existing side by side with each other, should give rise to very difficult practical questions: and the question which presented the most pressing and conspicuous difficulty was, whether a person who abandoned one of the schismatic communities, and returned to the regular Church, was to be regarded as having received valid baptism. Was he to be considered as already a Christian, who needed only, by submission to such a ceremony as the imposition of hands, to be purged from his disobedience; or was he to be treated as not yet in reality a member of the Church, and accordingly to be re-baptized? Now St. Cyprian, in presence of the schisms and schismatical tendencies we have noticed, had inevitably been led to urge, with the utmost earnestness and energy, the momentous duty of maintaining the unity of the Church; and

he rendered incalculable services, not only in asserting that duty, but in promoting it in practice by his admirable wisdom in strengthening the episcopal organisation of the Church, and developing the system of Church Councils. But, with the too common misfortune of human nature, he was led, in the urgency of the struggle, to overstrain the principles for which he was contending, to lay down maxims which were beyond the real necessities, if not the apparent needs, of the occasion, and thus to entangle himself in future errors. He was led to emphasise in violent—the Archbishop does not shrink from saying "frightful" —expressions the absolute necessity, in order to salvation, of union with what he deemed the visible Church. The expression, "He who has not the Church for his mother cannot have God for his Father," may be susceptible of explanation if the "Church" be taken in a wider sense than Cyprian intended it; but in the sense that no one could have God for his Father who was not called to be a child of God by that body of Christians which was in communion with Cyprian, it was a "frightful" anathema. Even more shocking, perhaps, is the declaration in the *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, that persons outside the Church —Cyprian's Church—"even if slain in confession

of the sacred name," do not have their fault washed away, even by their very blood. "A man cannot be a martyr who is not in the Church." Words like these bore a terrible fruit in the support they gave to the great Donatist schism which followed in fifty years. But what we are now concerned to observe is, that these principles, logically applied, led Cyprian irresistibly to the contention that Baptism could not be valid if not administered within "the Church," and by the Church's recognised ministers. The Archbishop, on pp. 751–752 of his article, gives a full and striking summary of Cyprian's arguments. As there is only "one Church," there can be only one Baptism; "Baptism is a function of holy orders, . . . and if external Baptism is true, the Church has many centres; not one foundation rock, but several;" the faith of the recipient of such Baptism is insufficient; for to be effective it must be true; but it is deficient in a cardinal point, namely, the belief in remission of sins by the Church. Biblical arguments are drawn from the one loaf, the one cup, the ark, the schismatic gainsaying of Korah, and so on. These arguments read ominously like those by which, in the present day, certain external conditions are urged as essential to communion with the true Church

of Christ, and particularly to participation in the grace of the other Sacrament. But what was the result? That, from that day to this, the Church at large has held, with practical unanimity, that Cyprian was wrong, and that the validity of Baptism is not dependent on its administration within any particular visible communion. The Church of Rome, with the sound sense which usually marked it in early times, opposed Cyprian at once; and in the next century formal decisions, which have ever since been followed, confirmed this reversal of the corollaries inevitably deduced by Cyprian from his doctrine of the restriction of the grace of God to one visible communion. Such an error of such a man, in those early times, ought to be a decisive warning against any such exclusive theories of churchmanship as have been adopted in later ages; and they are also a warning that, on all such points, the authority of St. Cyprian is one of the most dangerous that can be appealed to.

But we observed that there are other ecclesiastical problems of our day on which this history casts an instructive light; and we shall here leave the Archbishop for the most part to speak for himself. It is to be further borne in mind that these erroneous views of St. Cyprian were adopted

and enthusiastically supported by the synods of bishops, whom he summoned to consider the question. In the seventh Council of Carthage, held September 1, 256, "eighty-seven bishops of all the three provinces, with presbyters and deacons, met in the presence of a vast laity," and adopted the conclusions and the arguments of Cyprian. Here was a purely spiritual question submitted to an ideal spiritual court—such as the Bishop of Lincoln recently claimed to be tried by —and the decision was entirely erroneous. Let us listen to the Archbishop:—

"The unanimity of such early councils and their erroneousness are a remarkable monition. Not packed, not pressed; the question broad; no attack on an individual; only a principle sought; the assembly representative; each bishop the elect of his flock; and all 'men of the world,' often christianised, generally ordained late in life; converted against their interests by conviction formed in an age of freest discussion; their Chief one in whom were rarely blended intellectual and political ability with holiness, sweetness, and self-discipline. *The conclusion reached by such an assembly uncharitable, unscriptural, uncatholic, and unanimous.*"

Such was the practical result of an ideal

"spiritual court," untrammelled by any secular authority whatever; and there are those who seem to think it worth while to rend the Established Church of England to pieces in order to subject every ecclesiastical controversy to the decision of a similar tribunal. But how, in the Archbishop's opinion, was the mischief remedied? He proceeds:—

"The consolation as strange as the disappointment. The mischief silently and perfectly healed by the simple working of the Christian society. Life corrected the error of thought. . . . The disappearance of the Cyprianic decisions has its hope for us when we look on bonds seemingly inextricable, and steps as yet irretrievable. It may be noted, as affording some clue to the one-sided decisions, that the laity were silent, though Cyprian seemed pledged to some consultation with them. It must have been among them that there were in existence and at work those very principles which so soon not only rose to the surface, but overpowered the voices of her bishops for the general good."

Yet again, in the face of this primitive experience, there are those who, in the present day, would teach us to look for a remedy for our religious and ecclesiastical troubles by abolishing the agencies

through which, in practice, the influence of the laity upon the government of the Church is felt! Whatever improvements may be possible in our existing arrangements, it appears proved by the most memorable and unquestionable examples of primitive times that the mere reference of spiritual questions to a purely spiritual court would afford us no security at all against fatal error and injustice.

VII.

In our previous articles on this subject we have endeavoured to illustrate the general nature of the Church, visible and invisible, according to the teaching of the Scriptures. We have shown the truth and importance of the distinction between the visible and the invisible Church; we have exhibited the dangerous fallacies and errors involved in the conception that communion with some one visible society called "the Church" is the primary condition of salvation; and we have seen what confusions and errors were occasioned, even in the case of a man like St. Cyprian, by this preliminary mistake. There is no single community upon earth, membership with which is essential to membership with Christ. There are

true members of Christ in Christian communities the most distinct and divided from each other, and even the most hostile to each other. There are multitudes of true members of Christ alike in the Anglican community, in the Nonconformist communities, in the Scottish Presbyterian communities, in the Roman Catholic communities, in the Greek communities, in other Eastern communities. That question, therefore, which has racked the minds and tortured the hearts of so many souls, and which has been the instrument of so many conversions or perversions—whether a man can be saved without joining some particular Church—is for the most part based on a radical error. If a man be convinced that he is under an obligation to transfer his allegiance from one community of Christians to another, it would be sinful for him to refrain from doing so; and so far it is of vital consequence to his soul's health. But the cardinal supposition of the Roman Church—and apparently of a school in our Church of which at present Mr. Gore is a conspicuous representative—that, as he interprets early patristic opinion in his recent book, p. 19, "membership in the 'true Church' depends upon membership in the one visible Church on earth," is without foundation in Scripture.

At the same time the question of the right organisation of the visible Church is one of deep practical importance. In the case of any community the nature of its organisation could hardly be other than a matter of the highest consequence to its welfare, and history is one prolonged commentary on the immense influence which has been exerted on the welfare of the Christian Churches by their organisation. Among the mysteries, for example, of the providential government of the Church, none is more bewildering than the momentous effects produced upon its whole subsequent history by the change in the constitution of the Western Church due to the forged decretals of the ninth century. It was in great measure due to the manner in which they promoted the centralisation of authority in the hands of the Popes, that the corruptions in doctrine and discipline which grew up through the Middle Ages were rendered possible. That a systematic falsification of past history should have been allowed to produce a systematic corruption of future centuries is at least an appalling instance of the evil consequences which, in God's providence, may be allowed to work themselves out from a single false step. Even apart from this enormous falsification, the unjustifiable assumptions of authority

on the part of the Roman see have, from the fourth century onwards, disturbed the life of the Church, marred its true development, and facilitated the growth of doctrinal and disciplinary errors.

It is, however, clear that, according to our Saviour's design and will, all who believe on His name were intended to be "united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity." As Dr. Milligan has said in his valuable lectures on the Resurrection (p. 197), "our Lord described the relation of His disciples to one another by figures which implied that they constituted a new organisation. He pointed out to them the nature of the duties to which mutual fellowship introduced and bound them. He encouraged them by promises peculiarly applicable to their condition when thus combined." In that final prayer, which reveals with such solemnity so much of the Divine purpose for Christians, our Lord says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word, that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, *that the world may believe* that Thou hast sent Me." He proceeds to repeat and to emphasise the words we

italicised:—"I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one, *and that the world may know* that Thou hast sent Me." It seems inconceivable that anything short of a visible unity should correspond to such a prayer. We know, accordingly, that the divisions of Christians are a most grievous stumbling-block to the claims of Christ. They are a standing obstacle to the recognition by the world of the truth of the Saviour's mission; and we are enabled painfully to realise, by an experience so contrasted with what our Lord prayed for, the importance of that unity which He desired believers to exhibit. It is the apprehension of the importance of this great ideal which has led to those erroneous and hasty attempts at its realisation from which the Church has suffered in the past. There is no greater danger than to grasp at a true aim by erroneous or unjustifiable means. It is the essence of the very temptation to which our Lord was exposed at the outset of His ministry, and it is a temptation to which able and well-intentioned men have yielded, with disastrous results, at every stage of Church history. Unity, external and visible unity, securing the intercommunication of the various gifts and powers of all members of Christ's body, is an aim which Chris-

tians are bound steadily to keep in view, and for which they ought ever to pray and strive. But such a unity involves a certain agreement in essential principles of organisation, administration, and doctrine. There might remain variations of view on points of secondary importance both in doctrine and practice—variations due only to the different stages of knowledge or grace which individual Christians, or bodies of Christians, have attained. But no unity would be real which did not involve a substantial agreement on the cardinal points of Christian faith, Christian life, and Christian organisation. If, for example, a Christian moves from one region to another, and desires to be received into communion with the Church in his new domicile, it is, to say the least, desirable that the testimony of the Church he leaves should be accepted by the Church to which he goes, as adequate witness to his membership of the Christian body. At present, excommunication may exclude from admission to the privileges of one Church all the members of another; and this danger cannot be avoided but by confidence on the part of each Church in the action of others. But this implies a substantial agreement in points mutually recognised as of vital consequence.

What next follows, accordingly, in our brief discussion of this large subject, is the question of what is necessary for the sound condition of visible Churches. We pass from the great questions which concern the invisible life and being of the Church, which is Christ's body, to that of the due constitution and the proper qualifications of what the New Testament speaks of as "the Churches." What conditions are either necessary or desirable for their due discharge of their functions, and for the maintenance of full and free communion between their members? The questions thus raised are not merely questions of name and dignity; they not merely involve the much-debated question what conditions give to a community a claim to the title of "Church." They concern the daily practical life of Christians, and of the various Christian communities, and they are essential to any efforts which may be made to promote greater unity among Christians. From the latter point of view they have of late been attracting urgent attention; and they demand our earnest practical consideration.

VIII.

The question of the essential qualifications of a true Church was necessarily discussed at the time of the Reformation with peculiar urgency. Perhaps the most effective weapon of Roman controversialists was the argument that their communion alone had the true notes or marks of the Church, and that consequently the reformed communions were in a state of schism. It is striking to find Field, moreover, observing that the very confusions of the time made it the more requisite for ordinary men to ascertain which of the various contending communions was the true Church, that they might rest in its judgment amidst the incessant and distracting debates around them. But on other grounds it was, of course, of vital importance to the Reformers to show, in Field's words, "that we have not departed from the ancient faith, or forsaken the fellowship of the Catholic Church, but that we have forsaken a part to hold communion with the whole." It was the purpose, accordingly, of Field's great work to explain "the nature of the Church, the notes whereby it may be known, and the privileges that pertain to it." The first of these heads we have dealt with. The second,

"the notes of the Church," is what we have next to consider; and there could be no better commentary on it than was afforded by the Reformation itself and the arguments it called forth. The question seems assuming a fresh importance in our own day in respect to the relation of the Church of England to other reformed bodies; and this very point, "of the notes of the Church," is directly involved in such debates as those on the Christian ministry and on reunion at the Cardiff Church Congress.

Now the ground generally taken by the Roman controversialists was that the notes or marks of the Church were to be found in such features as antiquity, succession, unity, universality, and catholicity. Practically it may be said that they took the designation of the Church in the creeds, as One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic, and giving these designations a convenient interpretation, claimed that the Roman communion alone possessed them. The position of the Reformers, on the contrary, is well expressed by Field (book ii. ch. 2): "The notes . . . that are inseparable, perpetual, and absolutely proper and peculiar, which perpetually distinguish the true Catholic Church from all other societies of men and professions of religion in the world, are three. First,

the entire profession of those supernatural verities which God hath revealed in Christ His Son: Secondly, the use of such holy ceremonies and Sacraments as He hath instituted and appointed. . . . Thirdly, an union or connection of men in this profession and use of these Sacraments, under lawful pastors and guides, appointed, authorised, and sanctified, to direct and lead them in the happy ways of eternal salvation." This is but an amplification of the statement in our Article that "the visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same;" for, as Bishop Wordsworth observes in his *Theophilus Anglicanus** (p. 13), the due use of the Sacraments involves due ecclesiastical discipline and a lawful ministry. We claim our position as a true and sound branch of the Catholic Church by virtue of our possession of these essential qualifications, and we maintain the unsoundness of the Roman communion on the ground that neither antiquity, nor succession, nor

* There is a strange misprint in the "new edition" of this work (Rivingtons, 1874), from which the quotation is made. The article is quoted as saying "the Sacraments are *visibly* administered."

extent, even if amounting to practical universality, is sufficient without them. Now the most interesting point in relation to this contention of our Reformers is, that the Romanists themselves not only admit it in principle, but practically make it the basis of their excommunication of other Churches. Whatever, for instance, may be a Roman divine's opinion on the "validity" of Anglican orders, he will not dispute the validity of the orders of the Greek Church, or the antiquity and succession of various other communions of Christians whom, nevertheless, he holds to be out of the pale of the true Church. What is his reason? Simply that such communions, though possessing all other essential notes of a Church, repudiate what he regards as vital elements of Christian belief and practice, in not submitting to the authority of the see of Rome. It is not the mere fact of there having been a regular succession of ministry in a Church which affords a sure mark of its being a true Church, but the fact of a lawful succession. But a lawful succession implies a succession of ministers who have maintained the true faith. In the case, which has too often occurred, of a bishop adopting some deadly heresy and his Church following him, it is not to be supposed that

by mere virtue of the correct external succession the Church continues a true one. A succession is only valid in this sense where it is a succession in the true faith and right discipline of the Church Catholic. In fact, while the Church as a whole, and considered in its absolute perfection, exhibits those attributes of being "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic," of which the Creed speaks, the claim of individual Churches to those attributes can only be tested by the correspondence of such Churches, in their teaching and their order, to Scriptural and Apostolic standards. A Church may have been founded by Apostles, and may show an unbroken line of Episcopal succession, and yet in its teaching and its use of the Sacraments it may have so grievously erred as to make it wrong for other Churches to maintain communion with it.

It seems necessary, indeed, to point out, in connection with recent discussions, what a strange light is cast by the history of the Church upon the great stress now frequently laid upon what is called "Apostolic succession" as a secure test of the position of a Church. If we have Apostolic succession, we are told, we are quite sure of the "validity" of our Sacraments, that is, of the security of our enjoyment of such blessings as they convey.

Now it must needs be asked, as a matter of fact, what security has been afforded by Apostolic succession against the greatest evils by which the Church can be afflicted? Did Apostolic succession prevent the greater part of the Church of the fourth century from adopting Arianism? It was in Churches with the most undoubted succession, direct from Apostles, that that grievous heresy, the most deadly that ever arose, spread and flourished. What security has Apostolic succession afforded to the Roman or Greek communions against the most disastrous errors, superstitions, and abuses? At the time of the Reformation, what security or what help did Apostolical succession afford in Germany? The plain fact is, that the most corrupt parts of the Church have frequently been those in which the most undoubted and most regular Apostolic succession has prevailed; and so far therefore as we can see and judge, there is no sign of its affording any sufficient security to our Christian faith or Christian life in matters at once the most vital and the most plainly within our observation. When it is alleged to secure validity to Sacraments, reference is made to matters beyond such observation. But we must be content to go no further on this occasion than thus to point out that the protest

of our Reformers against adopting succession, apart from purity of doctrine, as a note of the Church, is abundantly justified by history.

IX.

The necessity of the threefold ministry to the due constitution of the Church is a principle admitted by all authoritative English divines. In another article we will consider the foundations on which it rests, and some of its practical bearings on our relations to other communities. But it seems requisite in the first instance to guard against certain exaggerations and misapprehensions of its importance which are diligently fostered by a school of thought at present very prominent and aggressive among us. It is alleged, not only that an Episcopal ministry is essential to the due constitution of a Church, but that it is essential to the secure enjoyment of Sacramental grace. It is, indeed, frankly admitted by the best spokesman of this school that it is by no means essential to its actual enjoyment, since God can and does dispense such grace "equitably." Mr. Gore, dealing with the position of communities without Episcopal succession (*The*

Church and the Ministry, p. 111, note), says that "when we speak of essentials in religion, it is of course important to recall that God is a Father and equitable, and that His action is not tied to His covenanted channels;" and, again (on p. 346), "the blame for separations lies, on any fair showing, quite sufficiently with the Church to make it intelligible that God should have let the action of His grace extend itself widely and freely beyond its covenanted channels." These are considerable admissions; though we confess that for a theologian to feel obliged to acknowledge that, as a matter of fact, the grace of God has operated and does operate "widely and freely" in communions which do not fulfil certain conditions, and yet to feel obliged to explain the fact as a sort of anomaly, seems to exhibit a curious inversion of thought. God's actual dealings are not only the best but, in conjunction with His Word, the only sufficient guide to His will. But involved in this representation of the matter is the assumption that the characteristic grace of the Sacraments is, under some alleged "covenant," securely promised to those alone to whom the Sacraments are administered by an episcopally-ordained ministry. In the official report of Mr. Gore's address at Cardiff (p. 381), he says, "No orders

are valid, then, except such as are imparted in due sequence of Apostolic successions; on the ministry of one validly ordained depend 'valid' Sacraments." Further on we find, "We do not say, then, to any—'We know you have not got grace; we know your Sacraments do not convey grace.' But we say, 'We know that ours do, and that they fulfil, what yours do not, the terms of the covenant:' the idea of the covenant involves *security*. That is what valid Sacraments mean; Sacraments which, being administered under terms of the Divine covenant, have the security of the covenant about them."

Now what we are concerned to point out in the present article is that this is going much further than saying that "valid" orders are essential to the due constitution of a Church. It is even going further than saying that such orders are essential to the constitution of a Church at all. It is an extension of this principle in a direction which is not indeed unprecedented, but which has hitherto been deemed heretical. It is a practical reassertion of the Cyprianic principle which, as was shown in a previous article of this series, constituted the characteristic error of that Father, and which has been formally repudiated by the Church at large ever since his

time. Cyprian, and Cyprian's Councils, asserted that baptism administered by ministers in schism was invalid. It would appear a similar contention in principle that a valid baptism depends on the ministry of one validly ordained. But it is a perfectly recognised principle that it does not. It is allowed on all hands that lay baptism, in cases of necessity, is valid. Lest it should be replied that Mr. Gore admits as much by saying that the grace of God is not tied to covenanted channels, it is important to observe that the principle involved in the recognition of lay baptism goes much further. It does not leave the baptized infant to the bare hope of uncovenanted mercies. It distinctly asserts that baptism so administered is actually valid, and has all the security of a covenant. It seems to us very surprising that so loose a proposition as that of Mr. Gore should have been enunciated by a man of so much learning and acuteness. A High Churchman, surely, is not the man to disparage the importance of the grace given in baptism; and if it be a received Church principle that one of the two great Sacraments of the Gospel is, in case of need, securely given without the action of a "valid ministry," or any regular ministry at all, what becomes of the general proposition, so broadly and unre-

servedly enunciated, that "on the ministry of one validly ordained depend valid Sacraments"? The whole question of the position of the foreign reformed Churches—which, as we shall see, is carefully to be distinguished from that of Non-conformist communities in our own country—is whether their case at the Reformation was one of necessity. If it was, then, so far at all events as baptism is concerned, their enjoyment of the grace of that Sacrament is not merely possible, it is assured.

Probably, however, in this general language about Sacraments, what is really in view is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It would be dealing with another doctrine, beyond the scope of these articles, to discuss the view under which that Sacrament is treated as a proper sacrifice, which authorised priests alone can offer. We must confine ourselves here to the question whether its characteristic grace is, by some "covenant," restricted to its administration by men "validly ordained," in a sense which does not apply to the administration of baptism. It is, indeed, evident that in the general sense of the word "valid" one such distinction does exist. The case can rarely be conceived in which it can be necessary for a private man to take upon him-

self the administration of the Eucharist, in a similar manner to that in which the exigencies of life and death may oblige him to administer baptism. There would, therefore, be so grave a violation of order in such conduct as to render it unreasonable to expect the special grace of God upon such an administration. But when the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood is solemnly administered by persons solemnly ordained to the duties of the ministry, can it then be maintained that there is no security for the grace of the Sacrament being received unless such persons were episcopally ordained? Where is the evidence for such a contention, apart from those general presumptions which, as we have seen, are acknowledged to be inapplicable in the case of the other Sacrament? It is said there is a "covenant." Where is the covenant? Where are its terms to be found? It is no argument in the case to say that, from the earliest times of the Christian Church, the administration of the Holy Communion was confined to the clergy. Of course it was. It is confined in the reformed communities to the clergy of those communities. There were none but episcopally-ordained clergy in the early Church, and, consequently, none but episcopally-ordained clergy

could administer the Holy Communion. But a "covenant" is a very definite instrument. Where is it laid down in the Scriptures, or by Apostolic authority, that, where an episcopally-ordained minister cannot be had, there is no security for the reception of the grace of the Lord's Supper if administered by other hands?

We have the more confidence in asking these questions, because they have received a very important practical answer at the hands of one of the most representative of English High Churchmen. The case has often been mentioned, but needs to be mentioned again and again. In the troubles of the Rebellion, in 1650, Dr. Cosin, afterwards Bishop of Durham, had occasion to address a letter to a Mr. Cordel, "who scrupled to communicate with the French Protestants." The title of the letter, as printed in the edition of Cosin's works in the *Anglo-Catholic Library* (vol. iv. p. 400), is worth attention, particularly the words we have put in italics:—"A letter from Mr. John Cosin, afterwards Bishop of Durham, to Mr. Cordel, who scrupled to communicate with the French Protestants *upon some of the modern pretences*." These "modern pretences," as stated by Cosin in his letter, are—"(1) That they have

no priests; (2) that they have no consecration of the elements." The second "pretence" Cosin briefly dismisses as scarcely needing argument. The first he discusses at length, and he decides against it. "Though," he says, "we may safely say and maintain it, that their ministers are not so duly and rightly ordained as they should be, by those prelates and bishops of the Church, who, since the Apostles' time, have only had the ordinary power and authority to make and constitute a priest; yet that, by reason of this defect there is a total nullity in their ordination, or that they be therefore no priests or ministers of the Church at all, because they are ordained by those who are no more but priests and ministers among them, for my part, I would be loath to affirm and determine against them." He admits the irregularity of the ordination. But because *fieri non oportuit*, it does not follow *factum non valet*. Accordingly he decides that, "Considering there is no prohibition of our Church against it (as there is against our communicating with the Papists, and that well grounded upon the Scripture and will of God), I do not see but that both you, and others that are with you, may (either in case of necessity, when you cannot have the Sacrament among yourselves, or in regard of declaring your unity

in professing the same religion, which you and they do) go otherwhiles to communicate reverently with them of the French Church." Could there be a greater contrast to Mr. Gore's view? And if this was the opinion of a typical High Churchman among the Caroline divines, is it conceivable that there can be any evidence to justify the assertion of the existence of a "covenant," restricting the grace of the Lord's Supper to its reception at the hands of men episcopally ordained? It is one thing, we repeat, to maintain that Episcopal orders are essential to the due constitution of the Church, and another thing altogether to say that there is no security for the grace of the Sacraments without them. The former principle is asserted by the Church of England. The second is repudiated even by the High Church divines of the Caroline age.

X.

In the present article we propose to add a few words on the authority and the importance of Episcopal government, and on the consequent relation of our Church to non-Episcopal communions. The sufficient foundation on which

Episcopal government rests is the authority of the Apostles, as recorded in the Scriptures of the New Testament. The Acts of the Apostles describe, in the first instance, the appointment of the order of deacons, and, in the second place, we read of an order of presbyters in the Church of Jerusalem. Thus, it is said (Acts xvi. 4) that, after the first Council in Jerusalem, Paul and Silas, as they went through the cities, "delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the Apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem." Further, we read (Acts xiv. 23) that Barnabas and Paul "had ordained presbyters in every Church;" and in a peculiarly important passage (Acts xx.) we are told that St. Paul "sent to Ephesus and called the presbyters of the Church," and that he exhorted them, "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *bishops* (ἐπίσκοποι or overseers)." This contemporary record, therefore, of the earliest history of the Church exhibits its constitution as containing three orders of ministers—the Apostles, the presbyters, and the deacons—the presbyters being also designated bishops. As Dean Goode, in his invaluable discussion of this subject (*Divine Rule*, vol. ii., p, 238), well puts it, this variation of name "in no degree militates against what we are

now attempting to prove"—namely, the Scriptural foundation of the threefold ministry—"because it is not the *name*, but the *thing*, for which we contend. They were *overseers* of their particular *flocks*, and so are elsewhere said to preside over them (προισταμένους ὑμῶν) (see 1 Thess. v. 12, and 1 Tim. v. 17), a word which is used also by Justin Martyr with reference to the minister who officiated in the public congregation." But, further, in the Pastoral Epistles we find St. Paul giving directions to Timothy and Titus respecting the duties of the two orders of presbyters and deacons, the presbyters being again called also bishops, and giving them authority over those two orders of ministers. As the late Bishop of London observes in his remarks on 1 Tim. iii. in the *Speaker's Commentary*:—"We have here, then, the *fact* of Episcopal government, differing little from the settled Episcopacy of the next age, excepting in the circumstances that the chief pastor"—Timothy or Titus—"held only an intermediary and, perhaps, temporary charge, as the *locum tenens* of the Apostles, and that the appellations of bishop and presbyter were applied indifferently to the higher order of ministers under him."

With these plain Scriptural examples before us,

the universal practice of the Church immediately after the Apostolic age is chiefly valuable as affording an important confirmation of the interpretation here placed upon such passages. The organisation of the early Church uniformly followed this Apostolical model; and a Church which does not possess a threefold ministry must therefore be regarded as deficient in a point of organisation which rests upon explicit Apostolical authority. Further, it is essentially involved in the unity of the life of the Church that its ministry should be continuous and successive. The Church cannot, in accordance with our Lord's promises, be conceived as coming to an end; a new Church, with a new ministry, being then reconstituted. There is, therefore, a necessary succession in the ministry from the first commission given by the Apostles. But modern High Church theorists, and Mr. Gore in particular, have gone much further, and have maintained that the Apostolic succession necessarily requires a succession through bishops, since bishops alone have the power to give commissions to presbyters. Now we deem it enough to say of this contention that, by common admission, it is repudiated by representative divines of the Church of England, even in Caroline times. Of

this the passage quoted from Bishop Cosin, in our last article, might be sufficient proof, but abundant evidence to the same effect may be seen in the portion of Dean Goode's work from which we have quoted. Those divines believed in Apostolic succession. But what they meant was that, ever since the Apostles' times, there has been a constant succession of ministers, each admitted to his office by existing officers of the Church. They believed also that, from almost the earliest times, bishops had been the officers by whom admission was given. But they regarded the continuity and the succession as subsisting in the Church, and that a man is validly ordained because the Church, acting, as it necessarily must, through its ministers, has appointed him. Mr. Gore's theory, however, makes the power of ordination reside in the individual bishop; and it is for this that we fail to see any adequate evidence. It must be clear that such a supposition grievously weakens the security which a priest enjoys for the validity of his orders, as it makes them depend upon the assurance that no individual link in the succession has failed. But we are sure that the Church and its ministry, as a whole, have never failed, and consequently that all ministers who have been duly appointed "by men who have

public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard," have themselves a valid authority. Further, it is distinctly denied by the same representative divines of the Church of England that the power of ordination is in the nature of the case restricted to bishops, so as to preclude other ordination in case of necessity. A pregnant quotation from Field will be sufficient to make this clear. "Seeing," he says (bk. 5, c. 27), "none are to be ordained at random, but to serve in some Church, and none have Churches but bishops, all others being assistants to them in their Churches; none may ordain but they only, unless it be in cases of extreme necessity, as when all bishops are extinguished by death, or, fallen into heresy, obstinately refuse to ordain men to preach the Gospel of Christ sincerely. *And then as the care and charge of the Church is devolved to the presbyters remaining Catholic, so likewise the ordaining of men to assist them, and succeed them in the work of the ministry.*"

Now the latter was the case of the Churches abroad, when the Roman Catholic bishops refused the necessary reformation. Such, at least, it was in the opinion of the great English divines of the time, who had the best means of judging. Their

view of the due relation of English Churchmen to the Reformed Churches is most strikingly expressed in the memorable words of Bishop Cosin's will (we quote the translation given in the *Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology*):—"In what part of the world soever any Churches are extant, bearing the name of Christ, and professing the true Catholic faith and religion, worshipping and calling upon God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, with one heart and voice, if anywhere I be now hindered actually to be joined with them, either by distance of countries, or variance amongst men, or by any other let whatsoever, yet always in my mind and affection I unite and join with them; *which I desire to be chiefly understood of Protestants, and the best reformed Churches.*" Accordingly Cosin says that their ministers were, up to his time, admitted to minister in the Church of England without re-ordination.

But we must now observe that the case is very different with Nonconformist communions among ourselves. An entirely new and different element enters into this question—that of schism. There is no question of a schismatical separation between the Lutheran Church of Germany and ourselves. We and they are independent Churches; and provided the essentials of truth and order are duly

preserved in both Churches, the mere absence of Episcopal succession in one Church should be no bar to communion. But the absence of such succession in the Nonconformist communities at home is due to their separation from their own Church; and it is for them to justify that secession. *Primâ facie* it is clearly wrong and schismatical for a portion of the members of any Church to separate from its communion; nothing but the corruption of a Church in fundamental points can justify such a course, or relieve it from the charge of schism; and schism we are bound to condemn. It may be, as Mr. Gore himself admits, that the Church herself has been in fault; and so far her action should be forbearing. But ministers of communions in schism are in a very different position from the ministers of foreign communions, and a very different attitude towards them is *primâ facie* incumbent on us. What steps should be taken to heal such schisms, what the Church of England can do on her part, and what may be expected of the Nonconformist communities on theirs, are very arduous questions, into which we are not called to enter. It is enough for us to have distinguished the problem in principle from that of our relation to foreign reformed Churches.

XI.

We cannot conclude these articles on the Church, incomplete as they necessarily are, without some observations on the government of the Church, especially in its relation to the State. Any society, if it is to remain united, must possess some final authority to settle disputed questions of order which arise between its members; and a great and influential society like the Church must necessarily, by virtue of the general interests which it affects, be brought into close relations, either of friendship or of opposition, with the State. In both respects, as regards the government of the Church as an independent society, and as regards its relations with the civil authority, problems of the utmost difficulty have in all ages presented themselves. It is strange to hear men speak, as they often do, of the primitive Church and of primitive practice as though a recurrence to them was all that is desirable. The primitive Church, as has been recalled in previous articles of this series, was the scene of even more scandalous quarrels and dissensions than those by which we are now troubled. We are not as yet in so distracted and discreditable a condition as the Church of Carthage under Cyprian,

when no State courts existed to create the complications of the present day; and whatever view we may take of the story of Hippolytus and Callistus, it reveals a painful condition of internal dissension in the Church of Rome little more than a hundred years after Apostolic times. It is, perhaps, even more extraordinary that with the records, not only of history but of modern times, before them, men can suppose that the reference of disputed questions to what is called "spiritual" authority alone would be any security for truth and sound discipline. Once more, the case of Cyprian is enough to show that "spiritual," or, rather, purely ecclesiastical, authority is as liable to dangerous error as any other. The whole history of the Middle Ages is a warning against the perversions to which the Church is liable under the predominant guidance of ecclesiastical authority. Finally, in our own time, we have seen a great council of bishops, prompted entirely by ecclesiastical influences, and uncontrolled by any lay authority, solemnly pronounce, in the Vatican Assembly of 1870, what must needs be called the greatest falsehood ever uttered in the name of the Spirit of Truth. There is nothing whatever in past history to encourage confidence in the uncontrolled action of "spiritual" authority. Even

General Councils, as our Article says, may err and have erred. But the spiritual authority which is so loudly invoked nowadays is not even that of "the Church," as the phrase goes; for "the Church," in a General Council, cannot be appealed to; it is only that of a particular Church; and no one will claim a promise of immunity from error for particular Churches.

This consideration has a direct bearing on the further and more immediate question, which at present agitates a large number of the clergy:—Whether the State, or, as we prefer to say, the Sovereign Power, in any community, has a right to interpose in questions of Church doctrine and discipline. The question at issue is not the merely legal one—whether the Sovereign is judicially supreme over all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil—but whether the Sovereign Power is justified in asserting its authority, as at the time of the Reformation, and if necessary at the present day, in the control of the Church. Now if it could be maintained that the "spiritual authority"—let us say the Synods of the Church—could be trusted to uphold nothing but the truth, and to enforce nothing but sound discipline—if there were any Divine assurance to this effect—then the interposition of the civil authority

would be at once unnecessary and presumptuous. The Sovereign would have nothing to do but to ask the opinion of an infallible assembly, and thankfully to support its decisions. But in the face of the facts we have recalled from Church history, how can it be pretended that any such reliance on the decisions of ecclesiastical authority can be felt? If even General Councils may err and have erred, "even in things pertaining unto God," what security can the civil power feel in committing the control of the religious welfare of a country to the sole authority of ecclesiastical persons? But if not, then a very grave question arises respecting the duty of the sovereign power in the matter. The authority, whatever it be, Sovereign, or Senate, or President, or Parliament, which is entrusted with the government of a country, has the burden of a great responsibility upon it. The duty is incumbent on it of protecting its subjects, in various important respects, from injurious influences, especially in social life. Its capacity to extend this protection is limited by consideration of what is prudent and practicable; but—to take an instance—the State would not hesitate to suppress an association which was undermining the loyalty or morality of the people. Now, at the time of the Reformation,

it was the deep conviction, not only of statesmen, but of the Reformers, that the Roman Catholic Church, the doctrines it taught, and the practices it maintained, were gravely injurious to the national health and welfare, and accordingly it interfered by force to restrain the action of that Church. The characteristic appeal of the Reformation, as expressed in Luther's *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, was an appeal to the laity. The Church would not reform itself, and claimed, in fact, to be "irreformabilis" except by itself; and it was necessary to call in the aid of the civil power to expel the abuses which had grown up under this "spiritual" sanction. That which the State thus introduced the State has a right to uphold; and so far, therefore, from there being any anomaly in the reference of an ecclesiastical dispute to a "State Court," the State may be simply exercising a duty, as well as a right, derived from its inherent obligations to its subjects.

But there are, of course, other considerations which support the same view. Considered as an independent society, the Church may have a right to govern itself, subject always to the right of the State to restrain its action if injurious to the community. But "The Church," or the

Church in England, has no inherent right to parcel out the country into regions of episcopal jurisdiction and emolument, and to assign particular stipends and tithes to particular clergymen; still less has "The Church" an inherent right to give a bishop, like Dr. King, high civil influence, and a place and voice in the legislature. All these temporal things are under the control of the temporal power, which has a perfect right to determine the conditions under which they shall be enjoyed. Of course, when it has once made a compact on the subject, the clergy have an equal right to claim the exact fulfilment of the contract; and, if it be a part of the law of England that ecclesiastical causes shall be decided only by "spiritual judges," it may not only be justifiable but obligatory to assert the claim. But such a claim can only be a result of legislation, and rests on no absolute principle. The State is acting strictly within its moral right in insisting, if it pleases, on compliance with certain conditions of its own on the part of those whom it invests with temporal privileges, or to whom it lends its authority for their support. The father of a family has a right, on his own responsibility, to dictate the conditions under which he will admit a clergyman to instruct his children; and

it is by an analogous right that the Sovereign Power may claim an independent voice respecting the doctrines which are taught, and the practices which are observed, in the Church within its realms —especially when that Church is established.

The question raised, therefore, by the present agitation for purely spiritual courts is one which strikes at a vital principle of the Reformation. The laity, according to the present Archbishop of Canterbury, saved the Church of Africa from dangerous error in Cyprian's time; the lay power emancipated the Church of England from the abuses of the spiritual power at the Reformation; and it is essential at the present day to maintain that independent right of intervention in spiritual things which is represented by the Royal Supremacy. The claim for the sole authority of "spiritual courts" over the clergy is not one to be compromised with by friends of the Reformation, but to be refused flatly and on principle. It is time men were more careful in invoking the great name of "The Church" in these disputes. "The Church," as a practical authority, is, as we have said, inaccessible, and it is a mere juggle with words to appeal to any prerogative which "The Church," as such, may possess, in support of claims put forward by a particular Church.

"The Church" is under the government of Christ Himself; and under His guidance and providence the Churches are suffering for their unfaithfulness in various ways. In proportion as any particular Church submits itself, in all faithful humility, to the influences of His Word and His Spirit, may it confidently hope to be preserved from error, alike in thought and in practice. But there is no such security to be found in Spiritual courts, or Ecclesiastical synods, or Episcopal authority. The Sovereign Power of the country has the right and the duty of watching and restraining the action of the authorities of the Church in the nation committed to its government; and those authorities owe such respect to "the powers ordained of God" as not to refuse it obedience in matters unessential, and not expressly ordered by Scriptural authority.

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